

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NEVER FORGOTTEN.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER VI. THE SISTERS.

THE house in Raglan-terrace, where the Manuels lived, though small, was as fresh as a rose—as perhaps a white rose; and though it could not display a plaster eagle, or an ice-pail of the same material—as some of its companions did—it some way seemed to be the least flaunting of the whole row. There was a little garden in front and another behind, where the grass and the walks did not seem to suggest the idea of tufts of green cotton and dry sand glued on to a deal board, as the other pleasure-grounds did.

Their little drawing-rooms were fitted out with all the gaudy decorations and bits of clean showy finery usually constructed for houses made "to let." The ceiling and paper were about as white as ceiling or paper could be got for the money, so that it seemed as if it would be a relief to the eye to look at them through smoked glasses. The gilding of the moulding and looking-glasses were of the strongest and fiercest yellow that could be got for the money, and the radiating fireplace, having holiday during the summer, flashed back a distorted picture of the room, like the glass over its head, and was also about the best polished steel that could be got for the money. So with the knobs of the walnut chairs and the walnut headlands that projected from under the tablecloths, and the prominent portions of the rockery in the middle of the room (which was in reality an ottoman), all of which shone with splashes of light, and were only now getting over their primeval stickiness.

The effect of this air of stark and grim luxury the Manuel family had unconsciously neutralised by the dispersion here and there of many tasteful articles of their own. They broke up the stiff regimental ranks in which the furniture had been drawn up, and brought about a graceful orderly "no-order." In a very short time the contract magnificence was happily overlaid and tempered, and the gloss rubbed away to the dimness of genteeler life.

A large lodger family next door, eight or nine strong in children (with a father in a white

waistcoat and his hands under coat-tails, seen with an air of pride upon his door-steps during the evenings, who had ingeniously turned to account every corner cupboard, and might reasonably fancy he had hired a rabbit-warren at so many guineas a month), looking from their plate-glass window, began to know and take interest in the Manuel family: in the mother, whom they saw at times wandering listlessly in the garden; and in the two sisters, who went forth and came in from their walking. The nurses and heads of various sizes which were always permanently in the window, as if a procession were expected every moment, made no account of the small-featured timid mother; nor did the cold-eyed, rough-mannered son, who went in and out making the gate clatter behind him, excite their interest. They were mere lay figures; but as the two sisters appeared, infantine cries were raised, and chubby fingers pointed.

Black was the dress of all the family. With the mother and son it seemed the stiff conventional mourning, ugly and appropriate; but with the sisters it became the flowing drapery of scarf and lace shawl which fell about them in graceful folds. The figure of the elder, and her rich heavy hair, which she set off with a deep scarlet geranium, wrung toleration, if not admiration, from a London maid who was put away in a very high burrow next door; but the chubby fingers were pointed with more favour at the younger girl.

She seemed to be a child almost like themselves, and whatever shadow of sorrow was in the house must have passed by her. They saw her tripping out after her sister, always a *little* late; and her voice supplied music for her walk, which was more a dance than a walk. She was shorter than her sister, and her face was small and round, and so bright that it seemed to be set in her airy bonnet, like a bouquet of soft coloured flowers in its border. She was very young, and she seemed to have all the delicate bloom of the flower after which she was named. She was all softness, and tenderness, and love, and was made to sit the whole day in the warm sun of life; rather, those about her felt that she should be reared carefully in a sort of social hot-house, as a flower they might visit and watch carefully. In all the cold greys and browns of that mansion, she was a bright patch of colour. The

cold didactic east winds, the blasts of reproof, and chilling precepts, "all for her good," they found were to be kept carefully from her. She was not to know the rough things of life, or she would fade, and the stalk wither and droop. Thus, when there was destruction and general break-up going on all about them, they stood close round her, in a circle as it were, and affectionately prevented her from seeing. There was an amiable confederacy to this end. The brother was rough and sour; the mother querulous, with every nerve in her system shattered by sorrows; and the sister, impatient and impetuous, though full of strong affections—which were not workable elements on the whole. Yet the family fused them all together for her sake, smiled for her sake, talked lightly with aching hearts for her sake, and concealed all their scars and writhings for her sake. She was so pretty, so trusting, so full of little endearing ways, that dark rooms became lit up with a flash when she entered, and foreheads overcast with black clouds cleared suddenly.

And yet she was not one of the flighty grown-up children who at twenty still find life a toy-shop. She was what is called "steady," and took her share in the family duties.

The father in his white waistcoat, from his door-step, thought the elder sister "a finer woman," but the current of infantine public opinion ran in favour of the younger girl. Stray skirmishers of the family, out under the command of the London nurse, had met her, and had been spoken to, and on one day news was passed forward from burrow to burrow of the warren, that she had put back her tiny parasol, stooped over, and bent her bright face close to that of the then infant's of the family. There were two uncouth boys, whose habitual occupation seemed to be hanging their heavy heads, and dealing with their fingers as if they were sticks of barley-sugar, and whose faces began to rage and glow awfully whenever her name was mentioned, as though a blister had been newly taken off. She was seen when going out turning back at the gate to wave salutations to the windows of the drawing-room with her tiny parasol, and the bright round face breaking from its gossamer bonnet as from a shell, flashed back pretty signals of acknowledgment. And the pretty picture presently drew swarms to the windows next door, and stolid faces, mostly busy with human sugar-stick, lined the plate-glass as in an amphitheatre. The respective maids, who had early interchanged cards, talked the matter over; and through these channels authentic information trickled through the family, as it were down the stones of a weir, and which was a favourable testimonial to Miss Violet's merits. "She was like a child in the 'ouse," said the Manuel's Lady to her friend. "And we all looks on her as a child. The mother would mope herself away into her grave, only for 'er." Mr. Louis was a rough, uncivil kind of gentleman, "with no manners," but Miss Violet some way

"kep" him in order. It was added that this youth, though only twenty, had the "'ed" of a man of fifty. As for Miss Manuel, she was a fine stately creature to look at, "for all the world like a married woman," and was, in addition, like one of the famous unmarried "pictures at 'Amp-ton Court."

The details of their inner life, though greedily inquired after, were of course not so full and satisfactory. Thus they would have been glad to have had a sketch of the little night-piece in the drawing-room of Number Three after Fermor's visit. The mustard-coloured blinds had been pulled down, plate-glass was happily out of sight, and their lamp had been lighted. Mrs. Manuel was busy with some needlework, which, as reproductive labour, and tested on principles of political economy, could not hold its own in the market, but which, taken as a source of entertainment and of occupation for the mind, brought back large returns. The brother, a youth who had been fitted out with no profession, had shown a repugnance to entering the underground wine-vaults where his father had spent so much of his life, as it were down in a mine. He had no titular occupation, and went about "mooning;" protested often against his hard fate in not having been put early to a profession, and at times was subject to curious fits of gloom, as though he had been deeply injured by his family. On this night he was at the table, busy with a pencil, absently sketching odd grotesque heads, and ladies with veils and dogs—an occupation with which he very often soothed his feelings, injured at not being "fitted with a profession."

Miss Manuel had been at her piano, and her sister, in gayer spirits even than usual, had been getting up, and sitting down, and going out of the room to fetch something, until the constant rustle of her silk dress made the youth, who was sketching, impatient.

"Do, Violet, sit down or stand up; fix on one or the other," he said.

The sister looked after her affectionately. "We must excuse her," she said. "I know what is in her head, and what she is thinking of."

Her mother, whose fingers were busily crossing a pair of steel weapons in carte and tierce, as though they were rapiers, looked over at her too. "When the two gentlemen were here to-day," she said, "I saw it too."

The young girl, who had been still getting up to search for many things, and falling unconsciously into innumerable graceful attitudes, stopped short, and looking away from them shyly, and with colour rising on her cheeks like a tide, said, by way of protest, "Such nonsense! I am sure I don't know what you all mean."

"Ah!" said her sister, greatly pleased, "I saw to-day what an impression you had made on him. His distress was almost amusing. He never took his eye off the other. He was in a most uncomfortable state all the time."

"Now, Pauline, *suck* nonsense!" said the young girl, still in protest. "I am sure I don't mind him in the least."

The brother suddenly dropped his pencil, jumped up, and caught her by the wrists. "Do you believe *that*?" he said to the audience, and turning her round to the light. "Is that like blushing?"

He was the detective of the family, and in truth the tide was surging up violently in her round cheeks.

She shook herself free, with a pretty little pettishness. "When you are all looking at me so," she said, "it is very hard for one not to get red. He scarcely spoke a word to me."

"I wish he *did* talk a little more," said her brother.

"Except when he gets upon horses," said her sister, "and then he is fluent enough."

"No, indeed," said Violet, in a low voice. "I think he hates the subject; for he said to me, that to be riding a horse round a drawing-room—"

"That was Captain Fermor?" said the detective, quietly, so as not to scare her from making the admission.

"Yes," she said.

There was an awful pause for a few seconds. The elder sister bent down her head in deep distress. "We have been speaking of Hanbury," he said. "Who were *you* thinking of?" (Another pause.) "Upon my word, we *do* make discoveries."

In the other faces there was something like pain and consternation. The eldest sister's foot beat impatiently on the ground. The brother sketched with fierce strokes, and put in vindictive shading. The young girl stood there at the bar, guilty and penitent, her face glowing like one of Mr. Turner's sunsets.

"So *this* is what is going on," he said. "This is what we are blushing for."

But her sister, who saw that she was in real trouble and sadly humiliated, hurried up to assist. "Stop, Louis," she said. "We are always teasing her, and I saw that you laid a trap for poor Violet."

The brother shook his head. "She would not have fallen into it, if she had—"

A hasty rustle interrupted this sentence. Violet had fled to her room. The whole was of ridiculously small moment; but, somehow, it left a blank feeling among them, for they were all bound to Hanbury, and were his sworn and most affectionate allies. They were disappointed, and with a grotesque mixture of feeling, were half inclined to laugh and half inclined to despond. While she was away, they talked Captain Fermor over.

"The very look of him," said Louis, "is enough. I never felt so inclined to quarrel with any man. As he passes in the street he almost sneers at you. The other day I could have turned back and struck him."

"I am afraid," said Pauline, hesitatingly, "he

has cast his conceited eye upon Violet. He is so vain and empty, and so idle in this place."

"He had better not bring his idleness here," said her brother. "I suppose he would like nothing better than amusing himself in this house. If he comes here again, I'll insult him."

"Nonsense, Louis. You must not be violent. That sort of thing does not do in this age. No; the acquaintance is scarcely even begun, so we can drop it quietly, and without any fuss."

At tea-time Violet was obliged to come down and present herself, which she did with a pretty confusion, and a wish to hide her head in the ground—under the gay contract carpet, if *that* were possible—like a pursued ostrich. An act of indemnity, however, had been passed. Later, however, Captain Fermor was skilfully introduced, without causing alarm, and depreciated with all the powers of his combined enemies. He was ridiculed and jeered at, sacrificed in a hundred different ways. His sayings of the day were collected and set in a comic light. They were thinking how well contempt can kill, and went to bed that night convinced that they had happily succeeded in making him appear utterly contemptible in Miss Violet's eyes. Most probably they had; for she was seen to laugh very often, especially when her brother sent round a very broad caricature of the wretched Fermor, very cleverly drawn.

CHAPTER VII. THE NIGHT BEFORE THE STEEPEL-CHASE.

THE National Eastport Race was fixed for a certain Tuesday. Inland, some five miles away, there was a broad tract of rather shaggy country, ragged as a well-worn hair trunk, and broken up in swellings here and there, known, in short, to agricultural men as hopelessly "bad" land. But it did famously for a rough race-course.

Some of the military gentlemen, with a very skilful person, named "J. Madden, Esq." who seemed to be always generated specially a couple of days before every race—an amphibious species, almost wholly professional and yet accepted as gentlemanly—had been over the ground and laid it out pleasantly, with a judicious eye for difficulties and well-selected dangers. A hundred yards from the starting-place, there was a fine opening in the shape of a low fence, and a good fall or "drop" behind it; further on, there was a quiet brook, which had often been fished for trout, but which the scientific eye of "J. Madden, Esq." saw had wonderful capabilities, and, by a little divergence, could be included in the course. It was so timid and narrow that it offered only poor opportunity for accident; but it was arranged that half a dozen labourers should be set to work to widen it into a handsome and dangerous jump. Then the ground unhappily became smooth for a run of nearly three-quarters of a mile; but the well-trained eye of "Mr. J. Madden" marked down a suitable spot for an artificial jump; and

finally, after three miles and a half of sound labour, by a chance that seemed almost providential, a hard and satisfactory stone wall presented itself, which looked as if it had been fashioned of cold iron blocks and fragments. It was considered that this fatal obstacle could not have been found at a more opportune place, as making a sort of handsome finish to the whole, and being sure, as Mr. Madden put it, to "thin off" a good many of those who had successfully got round so far.

The day before, the usual unclean miscellany poured in. The field began to spread such a cloud of dirty dun-coloured sails that it seemed as if a fleet of shabby fishing-boats had somehow got in there and put out to sea. The gipsies, the players, the menagerie keepers, the roulette gentry, all camped there for the night. The right of putting up a "stand" had, on the advice of "J. Madden, Esq." been farmed out to a speculator, and some of the speculator's men were busy hammering together some terribly raw and rude planks, which might have been an enlarged flower-stand, or a gigantic gallows for carrying out the extreme penalty of the law. So open was it, and so put together with such an economy of the material, that it did seem to present nothing but a succession of "drops." On the night before, a miscellany of another order had poured into the little town, and filled and distended it to bursting. Betting men came from distant quarters, who contrived to make even poor affairs such as this bring profit; for money can be won and lost on such "events," as drops of rain running down a pane of glass. The betting men were so shaven, so collarless, so tight about the limbs, so partial to imitating a pipe with a single straw, and so generally flavoured with the noble animal who was their profession, that it was hard to distinguish them from other professors of the noble animal on the green, who came with a tent or a "Monster Pavilion" and whose evening existence was ushered in by a gold fillet and web fleshings. A kind of inn, or "public," with rooms as low as the cabin of a ship, received temporary rank as an hotel, and charged a guinea for a corner of a room whose walls were sadly bent. It became like an hospital on a campaign.

The evening before, too, all the horses came, who seemed to be regarded with far more interest than the men who owned them, or the miscellany who were to bet on them, or the boys who were to ride them. As a train of them walked in procession through the place late at night, after the lamps had been lit, all closely swathed in their robes, and hooded and veiled, they seemed like brethren of a pious society who were about to inter a brother of their order. They were "coddled" almost like delicate children that had mammas to wrap them up against the night air. They had greaves on, like a Roman soldier, and some who had red edging to their clothing seemed to look out through red rings round their eyes, like

clowns in a pantomime. Their symmetry and smooth clean limbs were not then to be admired, for they were in great-coats like prize-fighters before the battle. But it was known that the square tall horse, that was a hand higher than the others, and stepped in a rude sturdy way, was indeed "King Brian," the famous Irish horse, who had raced here and raced there, had beaten at Chester and Liverpool, and was to beat at other great Games. Brent was his owner, and was to be his rider, and "Brent" was to arrive that night—but very late. No one cared particularly, since "Brent's horse" itself was present. Mr. Hanbury's horse, "the Baron," had only a local reputation, so that the shaven well-pumiced gentlemen who came from a distance did not make much account of him. He was, however, visited in a mysterious stable by mysterious admirers, for whom it was hoped he would win moneys, and who felt him, and stood in a half-circle about him. Mr. Hanbury was to ride the Baron in person. The precautions which are taken on greater occasions were carried out in a mimic way on the present occasion, and a groom waited on him in his stable all night, and was popularly supposed never to have closed his eyes.

Still there was a strange belief abroad that King Brian would not run after all. It was whispered, though no one knew who had whispered it, that "Brent," to whom "Brent's horse" belonged, would not appear himself, which was a matter of small moment: but it was currently believed that "Brent's horse" objected to any other rider, which was a matter of far more significance.

"J. Madden, Esq." dined with the military gentlemen that night, and prepared a good deal of punch. The admiring crowd listened with delight to his rambling periods, which flowed from his mouth lubricated as it were with oil. Over the fumes of his favourite liquor his face grew into a rich lake colour. His legends of his craft were abundant. Craftily and confidentially ladling out his punch into a wine-glass, he "put them up to thing or two." He mantled into a profuse and boundless good nature.

Hanbury and Captain Fermor were both there listening. Hanbury was delighted with this genial flow of counsel. The other thought him one of those "dreadful persons" so free of manners, whom it was a terrible trial for refined people to encounter. From sheer ignorance such break down all the elegant guards, the carte and tierce, of conversational fencers. Mr. Madden, still fluent in speech, his punch, his lubricating oil, his lake-coloured smiles, which spread away in great coarse waves over his face, was not unmindful of his politics. At intervals between his ladling, he was busy with his book. The children about, noisily made bets with him. "He'll be scratched. I'm fearful of it," he kept saying, with meaning. "I know Joe Brent. He's been at his old tricks again." (The old tricks were tricks that led

to the affliction called *delirium tremens*.) "If it's *that*," said Mr. Madden, lifting his wine-glass half way in the air, "there's as much chance as—" And he engulphed the remainder of the sentence with the liquor. But still, with all these doubts and misgivings, "J. Madden, Esq.," good naturedly "took" any offers that were laid against "Brent's horse," just, as he said, to keep the thing going.

Just at midnight a despatch was brought in and given to "J. Madden, Esq." He read it. "By Jove!" he said, striking the table, "was there ever anything—What did I tell ye? 'Tis from Cox," added he, looking at the envelope in a ruminative way. "Cox is Brent's friend."

"Well?" said all the boys and men together.

"Well! Brent can't come. The old tricks, as I said. But Cox says, 'We must put some one on his back,' and, by the Lord, some one must be got," added Mr. Madden, rising in some excitement. "I tell ye, we must get some one."

"Ah! but that's just it!" said white-haired Young Brett. "Such a wild brute as that!"

"Not he," said J. Madden, Esq. "There's a way with him. I know it, and Brent's groom knows it. But is there a fellow among ye! By Jove! we must have some one. The horse *must* start."

Hanbury had been drinking some of the punch—from curiosity—in a sort of pottering fiddling way. He was a little excited—with talking, and talking loud above the others, and with, perhaps, some of the punch. Some days before, Fermor had said to himself, "I must keep this fellow at a distance," had taken out a new manner from his bag of properties and had fitted it on—one cold and formal, but polite to a nicety. This honest John Hanbury resented and fretted against.

"We are all of us booked," he said, "for something or other. We are all in to break our necks except—"

"Except Fermor there," said Thersites. "Hang it, man, why don't you side with somebody or something? You never seem to me to do anything! Why don't you take a side?"

"For many reasons," said Fermor, sipping claret, "too long to enter on here. I have no horse to ride, nor do I want to."

White-haired Young Brett laughed, a little foolishly. He, too, had relished that punch. "Hurt your leg, eh? Ha! ha!"

John Hanbury, who had a laugh always as it were on a hair-trigger, could not restrain another burst. Fermor's lip began to curl. J. Madden, Esq., struck in suddenly. "Beg pardon," he said; "I know what's in a man or a horse. No case of sore leg." Then with great respect, "Seen you, Captain Fermor, I am sure, with the Crowther hounds."

"Yes I?" said Fermor, a little astonished.

"Recollect the day Lord Tiptree broke his leg? You and three others in at the finish. How many miles was it—thirty-two?"

"Thirty-four," said Fermor, suddenly lifted

out of his ice-pail. "How well you recollect! Horse died of it, though."

"Ah!" said the other, "no case of hurt legs there. By the Lord, sir, you are the man for Brent's horse! I know your style as if I saw it yesterday. I saw you take the ditch and the heap of stones. Yours is the hand for him, sir. You'll sit him, sir, by—"

Mr. Madden had risen in his enthusiasm, and even pushed his tumbler into the middle of the table. The children's faces were all turned to Fermor. He sat with a calm but gratified smile, caught at the claret jug, and, with a gush, filled his glass leisurely. "I am very sorry," he said. "I can't—the time is so short—and—"

"Not a bit," said J. Madden, Esq.

"Pray allow me to finish," said Fermor, with great politeness; "and there are little matters about weight, dress, and the like. I am afraid it's out of the question."

John Hanbury laughed.

"I was afraid so all along," said Captain Thersites, insolently.

"But," said Fermor, slowly, and measuring him curiously, as though he were a preserved specimen in a jar, pushing back his chair and rising, "I'll not make difficulties."

"What? Then you'll ride?" said J. Madden, Esq., with something like a shout.

"I suppose so—I think so—well, yes," said Fermor, deliberately. It was quite an opening for true unflushed gentlemanly bearing. "Come to me at six to-morrow. We'll go out and look at the ground. Madden, get the colours altered. I have a jacket of my own somewhere—I always ride in mauve. Mind, six. Good night, Mr. Hanbury."

Thersites looked after him with amazement.

"He'll do," said Mr. Madden, in delight. "Do better than Brent, I can tell you. Was there ever such luck!"

Honest John Hanbury, however, kept looking steadfastly at the door by which Fermor had passed out, as if he could not quite understand. Perhaps it had begun to strike him that this was to be something more than a mere race between two strong horses.

CHAPTER VIII. THE RACE.

It was a bright and fresh day, and the sun coloured up the acres of faded hair trunks that spread over the race-ground, with such good effect that it really presented all the air of respectable and legitimate verdure. The crowd had poured out over those many downs; the whole fleet of sepia-coloured sails had spread itself on the horizon. The business and bustle was surprising. Some one had been sowing racing dragons' teeth, and they had come up a soiled, tarnished, noisy, glib miscellany—one that was at work ceaselessly with arms and hands, and a very hoarse voice, making ceaseless invitation. A miscellany that declaimed noisily over carts of stone ginger-beer bottles, that cowered

down over a three-legged stool, and conjured with a mysterious bridle and a skewer, that presided over pieces of coarse oil-cloth daubed with very raw colours and a very yellow Royal Crown, and a very rusted weather-cock that moved round languidly. A miscellany that did a vast business in nuts at little shooting-targets, whose range was only three feet long; a miscellany, in short, who danced and contorted in dirty fleshings, who picked pockets, who sold cards, lit cigars, sang mournful comic songs, wore decayed old scarlet hunting-coats, and swarmed generally, in and out, in irregular streams, through the carts and carriages.

The large nurseryman's flower-stand was black with human flower-pots. Below the flower-stand was the enclosure, where every one was as busy as in a market—where there was a sort of enlarged rabbit-hutch, and where there was something that looked like a mammoth slate hoisted at the top of a pole. The human flower-pots, growing animated at times, came down here to market, and wore little yellow tickets in their hats, and pushed backwards and forwards, and talked hoarsely and loudly, and all together, to stray men upon horseback, who carried their hunting-whips on their knees at an acute angle, much as the bronze mounted Louises do their truncheons. Beyond this was a plantation of carriages, carts, and cabs, all horseless, and put closely together like a gigantic barricade; and here, in a little chartered phaeton, were the Manuel family, broken from their privacy, amused, delighted, and wondering exceedingly. That is, the two girls merely. But Mrs. Manuel had sat in a vast stone amphitheatre, and had seen the wild plungings of the bull, and the gored horses, and the sand steeped in clotted blood, and stayed at home. This gentler spectacle seemed a little tame after that.

With them was a new figure, about whom neighbouring carts and carriages began to speculate; but who was soon known to be a brother, a swarthy meditative brother, very young, and with rich black hair, so glossy that it looked as if it had been steeped in unguents. He was only twenty, but looked about him with a grave air of wisdom. In that little phaeton, however, reigned a certain flutter. There was to be battle and danger, which is the true basis of excitement, and a likely victory.

Some small skirmishing had been got through, worthless contests between say two inglorious steeds, mere foils for the greater struggle fixed for one o'clock. Hanbury had come up to them, his face all one great flush. "Only an hour off," he said. "You never saw anything like the Baron this morning—as bright and glossy as silk—you could see yourself in his coat. He will do, I think," he added. "I have not seen King Brian. But I am not afraid of him."

The sun flashed upon the face of the eldest Miss Manuel. "And that discreet Captain Fermor! I hope he is here to see you win."

"O!" said Hanbury, ever so little embar-

rassed, "I didn't tell you, though—you haven't heard—he is to ride King Brian."

"To ride King Brian!" said the two girls together, but in quite different keys.

"Why not?" said Hanbury, doubtfully. "And yet I'm sure I don't quite understand it. And he will do it well—at least, I suppose so," he added.

"But you told us," said Violet, "I think, that—that no one but his master could ride him."

"Exactly," said he. "And they say it is great pluck to try it. But it now turns out that he is a great horseman, or something of the kind. I don't understand it."

A harsh and conspicuous bell, which had grown up in the night, and rang every five minutes in a drunken disorderly way, now began again. "I must go," said Hanbury. "Saddling bell." If so, it had been about the twentieth saddling bell.

"Vanity," said Miss Manuel, looking at her sister. "More of that vanity! He is one mass of it. This is all to show us what an accomplished creature he is."

The younger girl cast down her eyes. "I am afraid," she said, "it will be a dreadful thing to see. Do you think there will be danger?"

"And poor Hanbury," said her sister, reproachfully. "You let *him* go without a word of comfort or encouragement. I saw him looking at you so. I should have given him one of those red geraniums, as they do in Spain. It would have comforted his heart and given him courage. He will want every stimulant for what he has to go through. See, he is looking this way. We must call him back. Ah!"

It was Fermor passing them quite close—in a great-coat like a dressing-gown—calm, tranquil, as if going to a ball. He bowed to them in most courtly fashion. Miss Manuel stamped on the bottom of the carriage with impatience. "He is coming to practise his skill on us," she thought. But with his pleasant smile he passed on.

Hanbury, a few yards away, had stopped doubtfully when he saw Fermor approaching; for he had all the wonderfully long sight of ardent and sensitive love. But when Fermor passed by so indifferently, his rude broad honest heart was struck. He thought of the other's calm courage, and skill, and training in society, and of his own natural bluntness, which had really reached to surliness; and one of his most genial smiles was spreading over his face. He was ashamed of his little petty jealousy. But as he was getting his hand ready to stretch out, he saw Fermor turn back, and go up to the carriage. The younger girl was detaching a flower from others which she had in her hand; she held also a large black fan. Some, therefore, had dropped on the seat. Hanbury, colouring and watching with fierce wariness, just saw Captain Fermor making a sweet speech, and putting a red flower in his button-hole. In reality he had helped himself, and was saying, "I must carry off one of these. Just going to ask you.

Pray for the mauve jacket!" And so he retreated, smiling.

That was, however, the genuine saddling bell. For presently, out of some secret confine, bright gay-coloured figures, on horses as bright, began to defile among the human flower-pots in the enclosure. New modern centaurs, so light, so airy, and striped over with streaks—of yellows, and pinks, and all the gay colours—seeming actually varnished like the toy figures in Noah's arks. Presently the flower-stand began to fill again, and to grow black, and to rustle and flutter, and the miscellany inside the paling, with the white tickets in their hats, to crowd round each gaudy centaur with admiration. There was a buzz and a hum as John Hanbury, in pale blue silk, came along on his great horse. Such a mammoth steed, mahogany coloured, high, square, with a chest like a Torso, with a fierce eye, and his mouth strapped down to his waist. But so bright, and oiled, and curled, he looked as if he had stepped out of a boudoir. As he passed, his wake was marked by a glitter of little white note-books, and a fresh flutter of leaves. Approving eyes settled on him. When he got upon the open ground he swooped away into a full bold stride, as even as a pendulum. Men with broad brims awry over their brows worked away knowingly with pencils.

There was a little procession of the others—some small, some large, some long, some shy, and some wild; and each with a gay parti-coloured puppet on his back. Presently there was another hum. "Brent's horse!"

A delicate Persian silk mauve jacket, grateful to the eye, and Fermor looking as light and small as a boy. But his horse—an iron grey, close knit, with a heavy secret strength in quarters, but a quiet unobtrusive beast, as if walking out to water. Great admiration among the sloped hats at this power in posse. The sunlight glinted down, and brought out the rich tint of the rider's dress: the Manuels caught it some hundred yards away, and the second whispered to her sister, with something like a shy whisper of delight, "There is Captain Fermor."

"How calmly he takes it," said the other sister, scornfully. "All assumed. All acting!"

Mr. Madden, with a flag in his hand, is beside Fermor. "Steady is the word," he whispered. "Recollect, he will run away with you at the last mile—and let him."

Bell again! Start in some undiscovered corner. All the figures on the great flower-pot stand were swaying uneasily—steward in red coat cracking his whip excitedly to clear away last few stragglers. A roar and half-leap among the flower-pots. Thirteen little wooden figures out of a Noah's ark, a mile away, have been seen to start, and are spreading out like a fan.

There is a gentle rustle and agitation on the black flower-pot stand, and every second hand holds a glass—but a thousand faces are all turned one way. A few Lilliputian horses may be seen far off, travelling very slow, and strag-

pling, and have gone over a very tiny jump, as might be over a bit of card. But now the flower-pot stand begins to be agitated: there is a crescendo hum swelling up into a roar, as from a thousand shells held to a thousand ears. Flower-pot stand is giving spasmodic shouts, hoarsely. "Blue, by—" "No!—red—blue—red—yellow—blue again!—by—he's down!—no, up—they're all over!"

They were, in fact, at the stone wall—what Mr. Madden had called the "beautiful stone wall"—and were growing into sight, coming on nearer, magnifying steadily. Great agitation and flutter in the phaetons, for they knew not what was doing. But here was the stone wall. Up, down! up, down! one after the other! Blue leading, coming into sight with a flash, going over soft as velvet. Then a flash of red, then of yellow, then a roar of dismay from the stand, for two are down together. Roar! reverberation of shells growing louder, arms tossing, and a sound of hollow thudding on the ground, as if giants were having their carpets beat. Every head turning with a flash, making an inclined plane of faces, every neck straining, every foot stamping, every hand clapping, and the train came thundering by, blue leading, then a streaked yellow, black, and that mauve jacket, fifth or sixth, at a calm gallop, his stretches keeping time musically. This was but the first time round, and they have swooped away round the corner, and are gone.

They have been thinned down to some seven or so. A riderless horse, very wild, and with his own stirrups scouring his flanks, is going on with the rest. Blue comes to the fence, and is seen to look behind. Pink over the first. He has it. No. Yes. Blue next. "That's the man!" Then Mauve. "Yes," Mr. Madden shouts, "let him go!" But he *has* gone. They are coming with a rush, and Mauve, calm as in a drawing-room, has shot ahead. The great gaunt horse is in distress, and blue is using his whip. Flower-stand is one disordered roar of "Blue wins! Mauve has it—no—yes—no—yes!" And here is now the terrible wall at which they are rushing, as if they wanted to crush through it.

There are wise people who affect to know the great horse. He will go at a rush on the smooth ground. Here is the wall. Now! Crash! As they rise in the air, there is a dust of fallen stones; and Blue, darting out of the cloud like thunder, comes pounding in, the ground shaking, arms working "lifting" his horse. Pink second, half a dozen lengths behind; and Mauve—

Where was Mauve? Shouts of joy, victory, execrations, confusion, and a great rush down to the fatal wall. A mob was already gathered before this one reached the wall. "Stand back!" Some who pushed well to the front got a good view, and helped to drag a shattered rider from under a shattered horse. "Killed—he must be killed!" No one can speak as to this for a few moments, until a surgeon, who is hurrying up, shall pronounce. "Brent's horse" is lying helpless on his side, with his great round eye glazing fast,

and his poor smashed flanks heaving faintly. But Mauve, the bright jacket torn, soiled, smeared, lies stiff and stark on a bank as if he were dead.

The doctor is presently feeling him all over. Must be bled at once. Other doctors, looking after the horse, pronounce it is all over with *him*, and that he must be shot on the spot.

Others not so near, talked of it, straining their necks to get a view. "I saw it, by Jove! He rode over on him, as sure as I am standing here. I was as close as I am to you." Excited men from the top shelf of the flower-stand, with extra strong glasses, and opera-glass cases slung about them like canteens, came panting up. "He 'cannoned' him, didn't he? I'm sure he did! Who was 'close'—who saw? He was winning, I'll swear!" But no one was so frantic as Mr. Madelen. For the better enjoyment of what he had an instinct would take place at this stage, he had posted himself close to the stone wall, but in secure shelter. He was tossing his arms. "I saw it all; the 'King' was coming beautifully to it." He was furious and savage, and threatened frightful penalties.

From the Manuel carriage had been seen an indistinct ruin of men and horses crumbling down together. The second girl had the opera-glass, the others were all excited and in a flurry with Hanbury's victory. "I knew he would win," said Miss Manuel; "did I not tell you?" But she noticed the restless way her sister was looking towards the stone wall.

"Pauline, some one is hurt. I am sure of it. Do you see the crowd? I am afraid that some one is killed. O! Louis! Louis! run and see what has happened."

Pauline turned suddenly and looked at her sharply; the other dropped her eyes.

The brother went to fetch news. Just as he got up, a doctor was saying something about concussion, and giving directions for removal, with quiet, &c. "Stand back," he had to say every instant; and a thoughtful crowd, pressing on him all the time, called out to others, "Stand back!"

The brother came back, but Mr. Hanbury did not. "Well?" the two sisters said together.

"He is hurt," said he, "and very seriously, I think."

Even the eldest Miss Manuel showed some eagerness, some agitation.

"Hurt? No, it can't be. Go on. Tell us about it," she said.

But the second girl, a little flushed, was gathering up her black lace shawl about her in a restless fashion.

"He is quite insensible," he went on, "and no one seems to be able to say whether he is alive or dead. I didn't see a doctor there, and they don't appear to know what to do."

The younger girl had her hands clasped, and gave a cry. "O! let us go," she said. "Don't let us leave him to those rough people."

"Go! No! no! What could *we* do?" said

her sister, irresolutely. She was thinking how cold, how unjust she had been to this poor steeple-chaser.

"Don't let us lose time," said the other, opening the door herself and springing out. "He has no friends here—we might lend our carriage—we might be useful. Come!" and, with a flush on her cheek, and a decision in her speech quite unusual, she took hold of her brother's arm, and they walked towards the group.

There was a sort of sporting doctor there, who was busy with exploring and appraisings. In the centre lay out with closed eyes, with a face as white, and dull, and close in texture as marble, the luckless Mauve rider. His wrist, which the doctor had been feeling, when let go, dropped upon the Mauve chest with a heavy inert sound. The brother felt his sister's arm tremble in his.

"If there were any house quite close, *quite* close," said the doctor (whose sleeves were turned over as if he were about to begin an operation at once), "or if a roomy open phaeton could be got that we could lay him in at length—" and he looked round.

A very crisp neat-looking gentleman, seeming as if he were a clean cast from a mould—whose grey whiskers, if one took the liberty of touching them, would crackle as if made of wire—came up to the doctor, and said: "Just the very thing! our carriage—not twenty yards off. Only too happy; shall have it brought up at once. Beg your pardon, excuse me." This he said with extraordinary courtesy to a poor racing Fool in a battered cap and tarnished scarlet hunting-coat, and who, utterly bewildered by the civility, allowed him to pass.

"Very good," said the doctor, again looking round. "But the barracks are out of the question—two miles away, and a broiling day like this."

John Hanbury, with hands clasped, and a face of the most abject despair and horror, was standing beside the Manuels, quite stupefied. He had hardly noticed them.

"Has he no friends close by?" said the doctor, "just to take him in for a few hours—some one in those houses there, eh?" and he nodded at an incomplete terrace close by.

John Hanbury woke up. "To be sure," he said, hurriedly; "the very thing! Won't you?" he said to the younger girl. "Of course you will."

She understood this ellipse at once. "Yes, yes!" she said to him; "let him come!"

"Come! Where?" said her sister.

"To our house. Yes, he must," said the younger girl, excitedly; "it is only humanity!"

Her sister was overpowered by her eagerness.

"But—" she began.

"Thanks, thanks," said Hanbury; "here is the carriage." And the fresh crisp gentleman was pushing through the crowd. "Now, please."

"Gently, gently," said the doctor; and Fermor was raised softly, and carried as softly to a little open phaeton.

"My house is so far away, on the hill there, that really I should be delighted," said the crisp

gentleman, shutting the door on the doctor, "only—"

"Or the barracks. Which?"

"No, no," said the other, "we have got a place close by. What number did you say?"

"4, Raglan-terrace," said Hanbury.

"Now go at a walk," said the doctor, "and be steady."

The bell was ringing out harshly for saddling, little patches of bright colour were seen far off up at the stand—circulating. There was to be another race. The crowd had seen the best part of this show, and might be late for the other. A good many, however, remained beside this critical jump, as it was very likely there would be more falls and more accidents.

THE LAND OF MONTEZUMA.

EXTINCT races of animals are among the most interesting of the naturalist's studies. He delights to fancy the mammoth masticating the gigantic vegetables which now form our coal. He pictures to himself flying lizards big enough and fierce enough to snatch a babe out of its mother's arms. He resuscitates and endows with life and action every fossil bone, every broken tooth, every scale and shell. An ancient footprint on indurated sand suffices to figure to his mind's eye the bloated batrachian that made it. He revels in the beauties of a bygone fauna. A menagerie, which no longer exists, still affords him endless amusement.

There has been great talk of late about fossil man; about the age of stone, before mingled metals had brought forth bronze, and while iron yet was ore. And, in truth, extinct societies of men are at least as interesting as extinct races of birds and beasts. A broken potsherd even, a flint arrow-head, a stake deeply driven into mud, may tell a tale of wonder, a drama, a tragedy. The "Peruvian Letters" are a fascinating proof how readily the human heart yields to human sympathy, even when the objects of it are beings who have passed away like the shadow of a cloud; and now M. Chevalier conjures up a panorama* of what once existed in the distant land whither Maximilian of Austria and his Empress Charlotte have transferred their fortunes for weal or woe.

Mexico, before the Spanish conquest, is a brilliant dream reduced to reality. And this work of ages was swept away by six hundred men with Cortes at their head. For they laid violent hands, not on a savage populace, but on a state elaborately organised. The Aztecs, the dominant race amongst the Mexicans, had made extensive conquests. Their supremacy was acknowledged as far as Guatemala. The name of their emperor, Montezuma (the European version of Moctezuma), inspired great respect and

still greater terror. Soon after disembarking, Cortes, at an interview with Teuhlile, the governor of the province, told him that he was the envoy of an emperor quite as powerful as Montezuma. Teuhlile was stupefied to learn that the world contained another sovereign as mighty as his own. Some weeks afterwards, Cortes asked a cacique of what monarch he was the vassal. "Whose vassal can I be," the chief replied, "unless Montezuma's?" Some months later, after advancing into the interior, he inquired of another chief whether Montezuma were not his sovereign. The reply was, "Of whom is Montezuma not the sovereign?"

This prince was surrounded by the extreme of luxury. The lowest offices about his person were filled by men of high rank. Etiquette required that he should be addressed with downcast eyes. Cortes wrote from Mexico to Charles the Fifth, "I believe that there is no known sultan or unbelieving prince" (according to his ideas, the *ne plus ultra* of splendour) "who is served with such pomp and magnificence." Montezuma's own words at his first reception of Cortes show with what awe and admiration he was regarded by the indigenous population. "Your friends at Tlascala," he said, with a smile, "have probably told you that I resembled the gods; that I dwelt in palaces built of gold, silver, and precious stones; but you see those accounts are without foundation. My palaces, like the dwellings of other men, are made of wood and stone. My body," he added, uncovering his arm, "is of flesh and blood, like yours. Certainly, my ancestors have left me an immense empire; my territory is vast; I possess gold and silver; but—"

The first element of wealth, the population, was abundant in ancient Mexico. The received opinion was that Montezuma counted thirty vassals, each able to arm a hundred thousand men. But Montezuma's three million soldiers are probably an occidental hyperbole resembling those permitted in the East. Still, everything tends to prove that the country was once more populous than it is at present. Now, a numerous population is a sure sign of a certain advancement in civilisation. Where many human beings are crowded on the same spot, there must be industrial arts to feed, clothe, and lodge them, besides regular laws and precautionary measures to maintain the peace and order of society.

Agriculture flourished in the Aztec empire. The soil of Mexico lends itself to the growth of the most varied vegetable productions. Under the torrid zone, within a limited space, it presents a succession of every sort of climate, from the burning plains which skirt the ocean, to the majestic peaks where you find the flora of Iceland and Hudson's Bay. The ancient Mexicans had a great number of crops to supply their wants. Maize and bananas were their staple diet. The cacao furnished them with a beverage which Europe has adopted under its original Aztec name, chocolate. They had neither

* *Le Mexique, Ancien et Moderne*, par Michel Chevalier. A translation, which we have not seen, has been published by Maxwell and Co.

coffee nor the sugar-cane, but they obtained sugar from the stems of maize. Of their medicinal plants we have a powerful sample in the one which comes from the town of Jalapa. Their forests supplied them with vanille, of which Mexico long held the monopoly. On their cactuses they reared their cochineal insect, which is still an important article of commerce. With an abundance of cotton at hand, they did not want for clothing. The greatest novelty for the Spaniards, which they had to show, was tobacco, which they called yetl. They both smoked and snuffed it; but this indulgence, it seems, was confined to the rich.

One of their most curious crops was the aloe, or rather agave, known amongst them by the name of maguey, and which supplied them with pulque, a fermented drink of which they were very fond. The aloes, planted in rows ten feet apart, grew with little or no care, for ten or a dozen years. But as soon as the flowering stem began to shoot, it was cut out, so as to leave a sort of cup, in which the sap of the plant was collected, and taken daily, or several times a day. Fermentation speedily followed. The resulting beverage had one peculiarity which unfitted it for European palates: it was rare that it had not a slight aroma of rotten eggs, arising, perhaps, from the uncleanly way in which it was prepared, and the skins in which it was sent to market. The agave furnished, and furnishes still, a valuable fibre for cordage, sailcloth, and other uses to which hemp is applied. The points of the leaves served as needles and awls. With the leaves entire, houses were thatched. The root was eaten.

If Mexican agriculture had great available wealth within its reach, far surpassing the resources which Europe had to offer to its first inhabitants, its poverty in live stock was extreme. It possessed not a single beast of burden; not a horse, an ox, an ass, or a camel. The ancient Mexicans had not even the alpaca, which affords the Peruvians a feeble means of transport. The sheep and the goat were equally unknown.

Now, the muscular force of the larger animals is one of the most efficient aids to human progress. Where beasts of burden do not exist, man is obliged to take their place. Hence, for a portion of a population, the necessity of servile employment. All kind of transport, therefore, in the Aztec empire, was performed on the backs of men. The chiefs went in litters on the shoulders of their "tamanes," or porters. Of course the tillage of the fields was done by hand. This is still the case in China, where, beyond the valleys of the great rivers, or far from the canals, transport on human backs is customary, and the soil is principally cultivated by human arms. The conquest relieved the Mexicans of those degrading tasks. Man is no longer a beast of burden. Mules for commerce on a large scale, asses for the supply of towns, and horses for travellers, have become his substitutes. Only in the mountain districts are heavy loads, wood for

instance, of from sixty to eighty pounds, carried on the backs of men.

The animal food which they were unable to obtain from flocks and herds was furnished by the chase and by a few animals which they had domesticated. Like the Chinese, they ate a variety of dog, called techichi. But their principal resource for meat was the turkey, called totolin, which they reared in enormous quantities. Turkeys were a drug, sufficiently abundant to cause a national surfeit. Cortes relates that the poultry-yards of Montezuma's palace were stocked with several thousand turkeys; and Bernal Diaz tells how, every day, a couple of hundred were sacrificed to feed the beasts in the emperor's menagerie; proving first, that the said menagerie was vast, and secondly, that turkeys were not very dear. It was from Mexico that turkeys were brought to Europe.

For the transmission of news and orders, Montezuma organised relays of men capable of a speed approaching that of the mails of *our* olden time before the dawn of the railway period. Through the agency of these swift couriers, his table was served with fish which had been swimming the day before, in the Gulf of Mexico, or along the shores of Acapulco. For the same pleasant purpose Maximilian will avail himself of four-footed carriers and the carriage-road which runs from Vera Cruz to the capital.

The Mexicans were passionate lovers of flowers. They fully appreciated the vegetable treasures which nature had profusely lavished upon them. In their splendid gardens they assembled those which were most remarkable for their perfume or their brilliant colours. With these they associated medicinal plants methodically arranged, the shrubs most remarkable for their flowers or foliage, or for the excellence of their fruits or seeds, together with trees of majestic or elegant aspect. They were particularly fond of sprinkling their parterres and clumps on the steep slopes of hills, where they seemed suspended. If they rivalled Semiramis's hanging gardens, they may be reckoned among the wonders of the world.

Aqueducts brought water from afar, which fell in cascades or spread in basins peopled with curious and gaudy fish. Mysterious pavilions were hidden beneath the leaves; statues arose in the midst of flowers. Exactly as we collect the rarest animals to adorn our gardens devoted to science, so the Mexicans compelled the animal kingdom to pay its tribute of ornament to their pleasure-grounds. Before the Jardin des Plantes and the Zoological Gardens were, the Mexican Horticultural Menagerie was. There, were bright-feathered birds, in aviaries as big as houses; wild animals, carnivorous beasts, and even serpents. There, Bernal Diaz first saw the rattlesnake, which he describes as "having castanets in its tail." At that date, Europe possessed no Jardin des Plantes or Zoological Garden. That of Padua, said to be the first, was founded in 1445; Venice, however, claims to

have had one earlier. The others followed at a respectful distance of time.

At Tezoztizco (five miles from Tezcuco), King Nezahualcoyotl had a garden hanging on the side of a hill, which was reached by a flight of five hundred steps, and which was surmounted by a reservoir, from which the water descended into three successive basins, each decorated with colossal statues. A simple cacique, at Huaxtepec, had gardens five miles in circumference—a park, in short. The humblest individuals shared the taste of the great for flowers. When Cortes, shortly after landing, entered the town of Cempoalla, the natives came to meet him, both men and women mingling with the ranks of his soldiers, and bringing bouquets and garlands of flowers, which they hung round the neck of Cortes's horse, while others adorned his helmet with chaplets of roses.

Singular were the chinampas, or floating gardens, which swarmed in numbers on the lakes. Doubtless, the idea was taken from verdant tufts that had fallen into the water, or from rafts of wood on which grass had grown. These artificial islands, from fifty to a hundred yards in length, served for the culture of vegetables and flowers to supply the markets of the capital.

The arts and trades of ancient Mexico produced not only what was necessary for the requirements of life, but even articles of luxury. They were skillful weavers of cotton and aloe thread. With cotton they made a sort of cuirass (escuapil), impenetrable by arrows. They were acquainted with a great many mineral and vegetable dyes, besides employing cochineal. They baked pottery for domestic uses, and made, like the modern Russians, numerous utensils of varnished wood. They had no iron, but supplied its place, for tools, with bronze, which, by tempering, acquires considerable hardness. Bronze, however, could not have been very common, because, for the same purposes, they employed a vitreous mineral harder than glass—obsidian, which they called iztli, found in volcanic formations. They cut this natural glass into plates with an edge, and employed it for knives, razors (although less bearded than we are, they still had barbers), arrow-heads, and spear-heads. From their mines, which they roughly worked, they extracted lead, tin, silver, gold, and copper. They excelled in working the precious metals. The ornaments and vessels of gold and silver which Cortes received from Montezuma before ascending to the table-land, as well as those which he found at Mexico, were cast, soldered, chased with the graver, enriched with gems, and enamelled with a skill at least equal to that of European goldsmiths. "No prince in the known world," Cortes wrote to Charles the Fifth, "possesses jewellery equivalent to his in value." And he clearly gives you to understand that the workmanship was in no way inferior to the materials.

Another art which the Aztecs practised with great success, was the manufacture of feather tapestry. The country, like most others

beneath the tropics, abounds with birds of brilliant plumage. These feathers, artistically woven by means of a cotton warp, and sometimes intermingled with the fur of animals, formed tissues of the richest and most varied colours, of elegant and correct design, which were worn by the rich, or which served for ornamental hangings in the palaces and temples. This manufacture employed a great many hands, and its produce made a sensation in Europe.

A Mexican chief, when he went to battle, wore a mantle of feathers over his golden cuirass. His helmet, sometimes of wood and leather, sometimes of silver, represented the menacing head of the animal which was his family emblem, and bore a plume of feathers of his family colours. His arms were adorned with bracelets, and a necklace of jewels hung over his breast. Many carried a carved buckler, which was surrounded by a fringe of feathers. Their weapons were, the arrow, the sling, the javelin, the spear, and the maquahuitl: a sort of two-handed sword, about a yard long, with a double edge made of plates of obsidian fixed in a bar of wood. The points of their spears and arrows were often of copper.

The Aztec architecture was monumental. They possessed several kinds of stone of volcanic origin, which were at the same time light and durable. For statuary, which they practised much without producing anything better than hideous idols, resembling those of India and China, they had black porphyry and speckled granites. Their palaces were spacious, but almost all of one story only, and composed of separate buildings scattered over a vast enclosure, according to the Chinese plan. Their apartments were ceiled with odoriferous woods skilfully carved. The outside walls were coated with a hard white stucco, which caused them to shine in the sun. At the first Mexican town (Cempoalla) which the Spaniards saw, the horsemen of the vanguard, deceived by this brilliant whiteness, and also, perhaps, by their own imagination, galloped back to inform their comrades that the houses were encased in plates of silver. This mistake probably suggested Southey's

Queen of the valley, thou art beautiful;
Thy walls, like silver, sparkle in the sun.

Their temples were tall pyramids of bricks baked in the sun, or of earth merely, but faced with stone, surmounted by sanctuaries and towers ornamented with images of their gods. On the summit there were constantly blazing fires, which, during the darkness of the long tropical nights, gave to those edifices a mysterious aspect. The immensity of the temples and palaces, the enormous labour required for the constructions of all kinds which crowded the valley of Mexico, including the piers of masonry jutting into the lake, drew cries of admiration from the "conquistadores." As to the city of Mexico itself, when Guatimozin's obstinate defence compelled Cortes to demolish it house

by house, he wrote to Charles the Fifth that it grieved him to do so, "because it was the most beautiful thing in the world."

Mechanics were still in their infancy; nevertheless, the Mexicans contrived to move large masses, although less enormous, in truth, than those of the ancient Egyptians. Such, for instance, was the zodiacal stone, now imbedded in the walls of the cathedral of Mexico, and estimated by Mr. Prescott to weigh more than a hundred thousand pounds, which they had brought by land from a distance of several leagues.

Their monetary system was based on two metals: gold and tin. Hollow quills were filled with gold dust: a rough method of measuring the quantity. The tin was melted in the form of a T, which allowed them to have pieces tolerably equal in size. Grains of cacao served them for "coppers:" a usage which continued long after the conquest, and has, perhaps, not even yet entirely ceased.

Their numeration rested on the number twenty, which was represented by a flag. The base of their arithmetic was therefore divisible not only by five (a favourite number with all nations, doubtless on account of the fingers of the hand), but also by four, which necessarily implies division by two. The weak side of our decimal system lies in the impossibility of dividing its base, ten, by four. The Aztec signs represented what are called in arithmetic the successive "powers" of 20, that is 20 times 20, or 400, indicated by a feather, and 20 times 400, figured by a purse. It is as if we had special figures for the numbers 10, 10 times 10, or 100, and 10 times 100, or 1000. From one to twenty the numbers were represented by grouping together as many dots as there were unities. This arithmetic writing is very inferior to that which we have received from India through the Arabs, and which is founded on the ingenious idea of value being made to depend on position, namely, that every place to the left multiplies the value of a figure by ten; but it is quite as good as that of the Greeks and Romans. The signs of 20, 400, and 1000, could be reduced to fractions of halves and quarters, in order to represent, without much complication, a greater diversity of numbers. Thus 200 was figured by the half of a feather; 6000 by three-quarters of a purse.

The Mexicans had two kinds of writing. Not only did they employ hieroglyphic characters, both figurative and symbolical, but they had also, like the ancient Egyptians, phonetic signs, representing, not a thing, nor an action, nor an idea, but a sound. From this to an alphabet, there is only one step; or rather it is an alphabet ready made. Nevertheless, like other people who have neglected to carry out and turn to advantage a grand discovery, they almost always confined themselves to the use of figurative and symbolic characters. Consequently, their written documents required some assistance from memory for their interpretation.

Their books, composed of leaves like ours, and

not of rolls like those of ancient Greece, were collected in libraries. Unfortunately, nearly all of them were burnt, at the instance of the first Archbishop of Mexico. In his zeal for the destruction of every remnant of paganism, he endeavoured to annihilate the Aztec literature. He got together all the manuscripts he could lay hands upon, and publicly burnt them in the grand square of Mexico. Contemporary writers state that there was a mountain of them; and the sad example was generally followed, as a proof of devotion to the new religion.

Their criminal law was of extreme severity; death was the penalty of almost every offence; death for murder, adultery, and certain specified thefts; death for the owner who removed his landmark; death even for the son who gave himself up to drunkenness and dissipated his patrimony. Nor are these the only instances in which their civilisation was stained with blood. There were human sacrifices of prisoners taken in war, with circumstances of horrible refinement in cruelty.

Their morals were not dissolute. Marriage was surrounded with protective forms, and was celebrated with solemnity. The social position of their women resembled more what we see in Europe than what is customary in Asia. They were not shut up in harems, like the Mahomedan women, nor were their feet mutilated as in China. They went about with their faces uncovered, were admitted to festivals, and took their seats at banquets. In the nineteenth century, there are still parts of France where, among the peasantry, the women take no share in a feast except to humbly serve the lords of the creation. The Mexican women were as exempt as possible from violent labour. The men reserved such tasks for themselves, with a delicacy which might be imitated by Western Europe, and which, among civilised nations, the English and the Anglo-Saxon population of the New World alone observe. Ancient Mexico certainly had not reached the same point as modern England; but still the principle existed. There are few signs which more surely indicate the degree to which civilisation has advanced. Among savages, woman is a beast of burden; there is scarcely in the world a more wretched condition than that of the squaws of the American Indians. In the Pyrenees, you see women climbing the steepest slopes with a load of manure upon their shoulders, or descending from the highest table-lands with a burden of hay or corn. The strangers who visit those charming valleys for the sake of their pure air and their healing waters, must return with a lowered opinion of the pretensions of the French to be the most civilised nation on earth.

The Aztecs had their Code of Politeness, their rules of good behaviour, both for boys and girls.

"Revere, love, and serve your father and mother; obey them; for the son who acts otherwise, will repent of it.

"Take care, my son, never to make game of aged, sickly, or deformed persons; nor of sinners. Do not treat them haughtily; do not hate them; but humble yourself before the Lord, fearing to fall into like misfortunes.

"Do not poison anybody; for you would offend the Deity through his creature, your crime would be discovered, you would have to bear the punishment, and die by the same death.

"Do not meddle with matters where you are not asked to do so, lest you give offence and be charged with indiscretion.

"Be modest in your speech. Do not interrupt people who are speaking. If they express themselves ill, if they state what is incorrect, content yourself with avoiding those faults. Keep silence when it is not your turn to speak; and if you are asked a question, give a frank reply, without passion and without falsehood. Be careful of others' interests, and your conversation will be listened to with respect and attention. If, my son, you refrain from tale-bearing and from repeating jokes, you will avoid the fault of spreading untruths and sowing discord, which is a cause of confusion for him who commits it.

"Be not a loiterer in the streets. Waste not your time in the markets or the baths, for fear the evil one should tempt you and make you his victim. Neither be affected nor over-nice in your dress; for it is a mark of little judgment.

"Keep secret what you hear said. Let it be learned through others rather than through you. If you cannot help mentioning it, speak openly without concealing anything, even if you thought you would be right in doing so. Do not relate what you have witnessed. Be prudent, for prating is an ugly vice, and if you lie you will certainly be punished. Be silent; nothing is gained by talking.

"When you are spoken to, do not move either your hands or your feet, nor look on one side to the right or the left. Avoid rising if you are seated, or sitting down if you are standing; you would be considered giddy and unpolite."

Amongst the maxims for ladies are:

"If your parents choose you a husband, you are bound to love, listen to, and to obey him; to do with pleasure what he tells you; not to turn away your head when he speaks to you; and if he says anything which annoys you, try to master your vexation. If he lives on your property, do not despise him on that account. Be neither morose nor uncivil, for you would offend the Deity, and your husband would be angry with you. Tell him gently whatever you think proper to say to him. Do not make offensive remarks to him before others, nor even alone, for the shame and disgrace will fall upon yourself. If any one pays a visit to your husband, receive him well and show him friendly attentions."

These maxims of the ancient Mexicans are not masterpieces of literary skill; but they do not

contain a word which Christian parents of the nineteenth century might not teach their children: while the matter required to complete the code would, in substance, not be much.

QUEEN GUENNIVAR'S ROUND.

NAIAD, for Grecian waters!
Nymph for the fountain-side:
But old Cornwall's bounding daughters
For grey Dundagel's tide!

The wild wind proudly gathers
Round the ladies of the land,
And the blue wave of their fathers
Is joyful where they stand.

Naiad, for Grecian waters!
Nymph for the fountain-side:
But old Cornwall's bounding daughters
For grey Dundagel's tide!

Yes! when memory rejoices
In her long-beloved theme:
Fair forms, and thrilling voices,
Will mingle with my dream.

Naiad, for Grecian waters!
Nymph for the fountain-side:
But old Cornwall's bounding daughters
For grey Dundagel's tide!

QUITE ALONE.

THE continuation of this Serial Story is unavoidably postponed until this day fortnight.

B E E S.

It is not by casually looking into several bee-hives, or even by carefully watching one, that an observer can be justified in contradicting general conclusions. Bees, according to some observers, modify their conduct according to circumstances. This is a far more surprising fact—if it be a fact—than that they should be guided by an unvarying instinct.

There are three classes of bees in a hive: the queen bee, the drones or males, and the workers, which are of neither gender, with a few occasional exceptions, arising from causes which will be mentioned presently. The queen bee may be readily distinguished from the other members of the hive by her size, she being about twice as large as the commoners. Without venturing to say positively that this depends solely on the size of the cell in which the egg is deposited, and to the larva issuing from it being fed on a different kind of food, it is almost certain that this is the case. The royal cells are placed in a different position to the other cells, are considerably larger, and built near the centre of the hive. The worms hatched from these eggs are attended by the other bees with especial care, are more abundantly fed, and with a food which is said to be better in quality from that supplied to the

other larvæ. When the time arrives for them to spin their cocoons, the entrance to the cells is closed with peculiar care. The transformation having been completed, the royal occupant proceeds to cut her way out, an operation she is not long in completing. Supposing, as does occasionally happen, that two queens issue from their respective cells at the same time, their first act, as soon as they have had a little breathing-time, is to attack each other. The war is to the knife. There is no compromise, no surrender; the least fortunate, or the weaker, invariably receives her death-wound. During this contest the workers assemble round them, and, while observing a rigid impartiality between the combatants, effectually prevent either of them from escaping from the ring until one has achieved the victory, whom they forthwith accept as their future sovereign. On no account will they tolerate the presence of more than one queen in a hive at the same time. A close observer says that the queen selects her husband from among the drones, and flies away with him to spend their brief honeymoon among the flowers. This is a pretty assumption, but hardly capable of proof; it is more probable that polyandry is practised among bees on a very extensive scale. At the end of the summer, when the functions of the drones, whatever they may be, are at an end, they either receive an intimation to quit the hive, or some instinct tells them that mischief is brewing against them, for they assemble in groups and await their fate with the numbness of despair, or from a vague feeling that they can offer something like an effectual resistance if they are associated in a body; probably the latter is the case; for, otherwise there is nothing to prevent them from abandoning the hive. As they have no stings, of course they have not the shadow of a chance when the contest begins, and they therefore fall easy victims to the workers, though they do sometimes offer a determined resistance; preferring apparently to die in defence of their right to a domicile, to becoming homeless vagabonds, whose inevitable fate is to perish of cold or hunger. After all, however, their case is not so bad as it appears; they have fared like Dives all the summer at the expense of the community, and it can hardly be considered unjust that, at the approach of winter when no more food can be collected, they should be ordered to quit the society, and not be allowed any longer to partake of food which they have had no share in collecting. In this respect the practice of bees resembles that of certain savage tribes, who, in famine-time, intimate to their aged parents that, on a specified day, their sufferings will be terminated, and, in accordance with this intimation, bury them.

The working bees are smaller than the queen bee or the dræs. Upon them devolves all the labour of keeping the hive clean, of collecting the food for the royal table and the drones, and of making a provision for the season when flowers

cease to bloom. Apart from the distinctions of sex, size, and the absence of a sting in the drones, the bodily formation is apparently alike in all the classes; there is a powerful eye on either side of the head, and three lesser ones on the top. To communicate with each other, and to enable them to build their cells with mathematical precision, they are endowed with antennæ. With the aid of these they work with as much precision in what appears to us absolute darkness (but which to them, with their numerous eyes, may be light for aught we know), as they could in a glass house. When a community has multiplied to such an extent that the hive is no longer capacious enough for the accommodation of all, the queen quits it for a new home, followed by a large proportion of her subjects. The bee-keeper knows some hours before the event, that it is in contemplation. There is a great humming in the hive; the only way of accounting for which is by supposing that the intending emigrants are bidding those they leave behind good-bye. They have, however, an exceedingly keen appreciation of the comfort of a home in wet weather, and, if rain begins to fall at the last moment when they are on the very point of starting, they will never think of coming out under such circumstances. It is at such a time as this that the destructive propensity of the queen is manifested. As the moment when her successor will make her appearance approaches, she becomes greatly agitated, and, if she were not prevented by the workers, would tear open the royal cells, and put the occupants to death. When the swarm emerges from the hive, it is a common practice in Wiltshire (and possibly in other counties) for the owner or some member of the family to take the door key and a frying-pan, and beat the latter with the key, with the view of preventing the bees from flying to a distance. In a few minutes the queen selects the spot on which she alights, and the other bees follow her example. It is a curious sight to see this dark bunch of bees clustered together on a slender branch, weighing it down beneath its living load. It is customary, in some parts of the country, to guard against stings, by fastening a veil over the face, and covering the hands with a pair of leather or kid gloves. The sting of a single bee is not of much consequence; it smarts severely at first, but an efficacious remedy is always at hand, in the shape of the "blue" which laundresses use, common soap scraped and spread on a bit of rag, or a little tobacco well moistened with saliva; all old and well-known cures. It might be as well to bear this last remedy in mind at this particular season when fruit is so abundant; for cases have occurred where persons have been stung in the mouth or throat from inadvertently swallowing a bee or wasp which had buried itself in the fruit; and a quid of tobacco is easily obtained. The hive is held beneath the swarm, and they are either shaken or brushed into it.

The first proceeding of the colony on becom-

ing established in their new home, is to ascertain if their queen is among them. This takes but a short time, and if it should chance to occur, which it very rarely does, that the queen is not among them, they leave the hive forthwith in search of her. Having satisfied themselves that the queen is among them, they lose no time in making the hive air and water tight. With a viscous substance called propolis which they collect from the leaves of willow, lime, and other trees, they coat the interior of it in the most perfect manner. One of the bees, who may be considered the architect, next lays the foundation of the plates. These are arranged vertically, and extend downwards from the roof of the hive, and from side to side. To economise space one plate serves as the base for two sets of cells, which are, of course, built at right angles to it. The shape of these cells is that which our reason enables us to perceive allows the very largest number to be crowded into a given space. The royal cells—that is to say those which are intended for the reception of the eggs from one of which the future queen is to come—are, besides being larger, different in shape; and, instead of being built on the plate like the other cells, are attached to the cells themselves. As by this arrangement the mouths of several cells are closed and rendered useless, the royal cells are no sooner abandoned than they are cleared away, and common cells built on the spot. The desire to economise space is exceedingly strong in the bee; not only are the cells of the form best calculated to gratify this instinct, but the walls, though very tough, are wonderfully thin.

All insects are precocious, and the bee is not an exception. When five days old, the queen begins to lay eggs, an operation which is performed with considerable ceremony. Her majesty, attended by as many workers as can conveniently witness her proceedings, first examines the interior of every cell, to ascertain that it is in proper order, and, having satisfied herself on this head, she turns round and backs into it, her attendants ranging themselves before the entrance, and waiting her exit with respectful immobility; though Wildman, whose opportunities of observing bees have been very great, says they bow the head before her, and caress her with their feet and trunks while she is engaged in this interesting duty. The number of eggs which she deposits on one day differs from another; but, assuming that she enters on the average two hundred cells a day, it will be seen that she pays dearly for the honours accorded her; and, barring accidents, this duty is continued from the commencement of the warm weather until the end of August. Considering that there is only one queen in each hive and how much depends on her preservation, it is not surprising that the community should be thrown into great confusion if she disappears. Every bee, as it receives the announcement that the sovereign is missing, hastens to spread the news, until, in a short time, the whole hive is in an uproar. As soon as it

is certain that the sovereign is really absent, the royal cells are examined to see if there is any nymph ready to emerge. If so, she is released; but if the occupants are only in the condition of larvae, the bereaved community must wait their development. It will be said, if the accident happens to the queen before she has deposited eggs in the royal cells, how then? Well, even in that case they have a way of getting over the difficulty which is most remarkable. They select certain cells containing larvae of working bees, and demolish the cells and occupants of those immediately adjoining each of these, so as to enable them to enlarge the cells of the particular worms they select for conversion from working bees into queen bees.

The worms selected are fed with a jelly-like substance for the usual period, after which the cells are closed, and the development proceeds in due course, the result being, that instead of a common working neuter emerging from the cell, a perfect queen appears in all her glory. In the event of there being no eggs available for this particular purpose, it is said that the bees fall into a state of anarchy, and adopt extreme communistic principles, each devouring all the honey it can seize until all has disappeared. Then they disperse, and either join themselves to other communities, or lead a vagabond kind of life, terminated eventually by the cold. Instances of this occurring are very rare, and a man might keep bees all his life without meeting with a case of the kind, but it is open to any bee-keeper to make the experiment.

Some lovers of bees are so blindly devoted to them that they will not hear of their faults. According to these, bees are incapable of stealing, fighting, or any minor peccadilloes. This, as a rule, holds good with respect to a colony the members of which are related to each other; but it would not be advisable to place two hives in close proximity which had been brought from distant parts. As for robbing each other, they would find that difficult, but there would probably be more fighting than would be consistent with the most profitable employment of their time.

IN A SINKING STATE.

THERE are agencies working gradually but substantially to undermine the constitution of Florida, the rich southernmost peninsula of the Confederacy, more effectually than "secession." Alarmists might even hold that if the civil war should last many years longer, the ultimate fate of the devoted State will cease to be a mere political question.

The most dangerous enemies of the soil of Florida are what its inhabitants call "Sinks." Those absorptions of the earth, though on a small scale, are, in fact, so numerous, that one may almost ask: Is Florida slipping between the fingers of both Federals and Confederates? and will she ultimately—like those high moun-

tains of the Andes during the earthquake of Chili in 1646—vanish entirely from the surface of the earth?

All over the country I found, when in that sinking State, sinks of all sizes forms and ages. Some are slight saucer-like depressions, others, still deeper, like basins, of from twenty to eighty yards across; or only uneven slopes and hollows, which would pass unnoticed were one not informed that the land just there had been "sinking" since such a time; or that an old inhabitant remembered a dead level where, now, there are various dells, crowded with vegetation.

Sometimes—and these are the most remarkable—the sinks are round and even, like wells, which, indeed, one might suppose them to be, so regular and perpendicular are their walls. Some of these are formed suddenly, during or after heavy rains, and are the result of one storm. They are sunk perhaps in an hour, in a night, without sign or warning; in the middle of the road, of a garden, or it may be a cattle pen. On one plantation I know of several such sinks. One is about thirty feet deep, and eight or nine across; another is twenty feet deep, and about four across the mouth. Sometimes it is not possible to distinguish the real bottom of the sink, for after the soil has been washed down to a certain distance, leaving a smooth, regular hole, jagged rocks are laid bare, and the opening to a subterranean passage, it may be of vast length and depth, is exposed.

Many accidents, as will be imagined, have occurred from the opening of these sudden cavities when persons have been travelling on dark nights, and passing, as they supposed, over an even and well-known path. Generally, however, a significant crack in the ground appears as an admonitory warning, and it is not unusual to hear a person say, in pointing to a certain spot, "There will be a sink there soon." Wonderful caves are by these means being frequently discovered, and they abound most in Western Florida.

Some of the sinks occupy an indefinite time in process of formation, and become larger and deeper during every rainy season. When rambling in a rocky dell, or climbing up the gorge of a deep ravine, whose sides are clothed with the richest vegetation, and from whose base the lofty magnolia overtops the neighbouring oaks and hickories that root upon its summit, it is strange to be told that one is down a sink, and that all this picturesque beauty, this fruitful area of some hundred yards across, is the result of twenty or thirty years' growth. The narrow, well-like sinks have here enlarged into ravines, or dells, or gorges, according to the nature of the ground. Occasionally a spring bursts into existence, and soon a rich deposit of earth produces an abundant growth of shrubs and flowers, which, under those almost tropical skies, will in one season clothe the rugged walls with beauty. On the same plantation before mentioned there is a spring which flows in a stream under the ground, and expands into a subterranean lake of

above an acre in extent. The entrance is at first a very narrow aperture in the rocks, which has been exposed by a sink, and through which a man can with difficulty squeeze himself. Thence a descent of several feet into another well, or sink, discloses a second opening, through which a vast area is discovered. Close to this is another subterranean well, which must be of remarkable depth, for if a stone be thrown into it, a minute elapses before it is heard splashing into the water below. Tradition says that these two wells were sunk by the Indians in searching for lead, but the story is too improbable to deserve credit, particularly as many such wonderful caves and wells are in constant process of formation before our eyes.

It is true that lead is found in those parts, as is also the plant *Amorpha canescens*, which is said to be an indication of its presence. The owner of the plantation assured me that several specimens of the leadstone, or a mineral locally called the "lead-stone," one certainly possessing highly magnetic properties, have been found in that spot.

An intelligent American traveller, who wrote of Florida in 1832, when it was the recently acquired territory of the United States, mentioned that some of the lagoons, or "clear water ponds," of which the St. John's river appears to be almost a succession, were "said to be unfathomable," adding, "it has been conjectured that a subterranean communication exists between them," and that "it is asserted that a spring of fresh water rises in the ocean to the south of Anastasia Island, a few miles from the coast." The writer goes on to state that he "had conversed with persons who averred that they had seen this fountain, and drank fresh water from it." The subsequent discoveries of the caves in Western Florida, and the progress of the science of geology, induce a more willing faith in this assertion, at the present day, than seems to have been yielded at the time in which that traveller wrote. As we have also learned that the submarine inequalities of the Gulf of Mexico are greater than those on its northern coast—for there are no real hills in Florida—that there are submarine hills sixty miles south of Mobile, Pensacola, and Cape Blas, of from four hundred to six hundred feet in height, and as these numerous sinks bring to light a substratum of rugged rocks wherever they occur—our imagination may wander back to the ages long past, and picture to ourselves the formation of a country, this fertile Florida, from the débris of the Gulf, upon its unequal surface of rocks; among which subterranean springs are for ever wearing for themselves a passage, and down through whose inequalities the loose sand and soft alluvial soil are often sinking, and thus producing an ever-changing surface.

An example of the underground course of a river occurs in Western Florida, at a place called the Natural Bridge, where the Chipola suddenly disappears. It flows away without any perceptible rush of current, under no visible

arch or hollow, but beneath the low flat bank, where its width and its winding course give it rather the appearance of a large pond. About half a mile off it again reappears in the same undisturbed manner. The intermediate country is a flat and swampy wood, but about a quarter of a mile in another direction is one of the largest caves that has yet been explored. The entrance to this is from a rocky bank in the midst of the thick wood. There is nothing in the aspect of the place to suggest the idea of the vast and magnificent amphitheatre that lies hidden within. The ground rises slightly by a tangled path, a rocky bank, to the top of which one can reach to pluck the gorgeous wild flowers that, under the Florida skies, are luxuriant, even beneath the thickest foliage. There is a low irregular arch in the rock, and down, quite close to the ground, on one side is an opening barely large enough to be crawled through head foremost.

This cave is a favourite resort for pic-nic parties and "fish fries," to which all the young people within twenty miles delight to resort. The Chipola river abounds in delicious fish, and the day's entertainment consists, first in getting the fish, and afterwards in eating them. While the anglers are busy at the Natural Bridge, others are rambling about the woods and twining garlands with which to decorate the spot chosen for the feast; and, at a cool and respectful distance, the black attendants of the party are "building" great fires, and preparing for the "fry."

The feast of fishes over, an excursion to the cave is next on the programme. Each member of the party must be his or her own torch-bearer. Yet not exactly so; for the smoking torches that were first used to illuminate the place were found to deface the delicate whiteness of the roof, and have been, by general consent, discarded for the more dainty wax-taper, with which each person is now provided. The next business is to select a guide. Moreover, gentlemen do not go unarmed into those dark recesses, which are not unfrequently resorted to as hiding-places by runaway negroes and lawless ruffians: and some very terrible encounters have occurred between such people and the picnic party of intruders upon their concealment.

Our experienced and deliberate guide, therefore, first bends low with his ear to the ground at the mouth of the cave, and listens cautiously. All is silent. Slowly and quietly he creeps through the aperture into the darkness. Again he listens breathlessly, while the party in the outside world await his voice with eager expectation. At length the welcome sound, "All right!" is heard from within, and the next of the pioneers throws himself upon his knees, and stretches forth his hand with a lighted taper to his invisible comrade. When some half-dozen gentlemen have disappeared, and announced themselves to be safe within, the ladies grow courageous, and, attired for the occasion, creep, hands and knees, into the cave. The first

danger is the greatest, for on entering they find themselves upon a narrow and slippery ledge, along which they must crawl several feet before they can stand upright, and thence leap down upon what may be called the floor of the cave. The jumping gives rise to much merriment; but at last the timid maidens are all fairly landed, and as every person after the jump lights a taper, the effect of the gradual illumination is very exciting. As each additional taper casts its glare around, column beyond column and arch above arch appear, till there is light enough to show the wide chamber, embellished with cornices, pedestals, candelabra, and hanging imagery of every conceivable form; beyond which the distant walls are lost in impenetrable darkness. Stalactites of various lengths hang from the roof, or have dripped into fretwork down the walls. The exact reverse of the proverb that "the dropping of water wears a stone" is here observed, for the droppings from these rocks have added stone to stone. On one side is a series of arches, through which visitors pass to other chambers; on another is a massive pedestal, upon which seems to rest a Grecian vase. Here and there columns, fluted or beaded, and crowned by capitals which are adorned with spreading feathers, support the shoulders of magnificent arches. One may ramble for hours in this labyrinth of grotesque architecture, on ground as varied as the roof. Now the taper must be held low to avoid a chasm; now all must cling fast to the nearest object while clambering along a slippery acclivity; now one can walk erect, and lift the taper high to examine the rich beauty of the roof; and presently creep under a low gallery to reach a crystal spring, of which every one is eager to drink—for much good fortune is supposed to be secured in a draught of its icy water.

Of course there is a "lovers' leap," the Rubicon of the enterprise. It is a sudden and difficult descent of some six or seven feet, where the ladies are fain to submit to be lifted down, or run the risk of breaking their necks by a "lone leap" off the dangerous rock. Nor are the gentlemen slow to relate to their fair companions how a reckless and too independent "Northern girl" fell with great violence from this rock in attempting to jump from it alone, and was borne back, with a broken leg and almost lifeless, over the intricate ground; how she was compelled to be dragged unconscious through the narrow opening to the light of day, and was with difficulty conveyed home; and how the accident had put a stop to all that year's pic-nics and explorations.

Not the least picturesque beauty of the place is the grouping of figures about this "lovers' leap." On each side some of the party range themselves to concentrate the light upon the spot. An artist can wish for no better opportunity of studying attitudes, and the play of lights and shadows, than he would see here. Two stalwart figures at the foot stand with uplifted arms, to assist the slender girl who bends

bashfully forward contemplating the leap. Some of her exultant companions, already safe, are winding their way up and around a defile beyond; each with her taper held above her head. Others are waiting on the ledge, in tremulous anxiety lest they should be left the last to grope their way among those gloomy recesses.

By degrees the lights have vanished, and only two or three remain, glimmering like sparks in the profound obscurity. There is yet one distant chamber to be sought, and away run the last of the leapers to overtake their unseen companions. And now they have wandered far from the mouth of the cave. Already they have lingered too long, the tapers are flaring rapidly away, some are already burnt out, and others are growing unpleasantly short. Suddenly the thoughtless throng awake to a sense of danger. A general cry is raised :

“ We shall be left in the dark.”

“ Take care of your candles.”

One, more prudent than the rest, exclaims, “ Blow some of them out, and save them.”

Immediately all the party recal the circumstance of three or four gentlemen having lost their way, when the cave was not so well known as now, and spent, I do not know how many hours, or days, groping about in the darkness; so, with overmuch promptness, puff, puff, puff, and out go the candles, one after another, till a sudden gloom gives rise to fresh alarm; for now there is equal danger of darkness with plenty of candles at hand. Order is at length restored, and the steady ones of the party having secured a few of the longest tapers to be kept in reserve, the giddy pleasure-seekers put themselves in train, and require no further urging to scramble up the lovers' leap, and retrace their steps to daylight.

The extent of this cave is said to be about one hundred yards, but I doubt if it has been very accurately measured, or even thoroughly explored. There are many others of the same character about the country, to some of which access can be obtained only from the water. Several are along the banks of the Chipola river, and one, said to be very extensive, opens from a spring, which has expanded into a small lake, known by the name of the Blue Spring.

These “ clear water ponds” are of remarkable beauty. The Blue Spring is ten or twelve miles from the Natural Bridge, and is as popular a resort of picnickians as is the cave just described.

The inhabitants of Florida enjoy life in a manner which, in our dewy and misty England, we should scarcely associate with either health or comfort. It consists in a custom of “ camping out,” or leading, for a time, a gipsy life to the letter. A family, or several families, with their attendants, a supply of food and other essentials, provide themselves with tents, and form a little social encampment on the banks of some inviting stream or lake, where they live

for a week or two, amusing themselves with hunting, or fishing, and growing fat upon the fruits of their sport; luxuriating in the purest of baths, and reposing amidst the loveliest scenes that nature can provide. The one great drawback to their perfect felicity is the danger of being, in their turn, devoured by insects, but the inhabitants either get used to the insects, or the insects to them; and as their purpose is enjoyment rather than occupation, the *dolce far niente* is not greatly interrupted by the necessity of perpetual fanning in self-defence.

No more lovely spot can be imagined than this Blue Spring, which takes its name from its deep transparent waters, through which the bed of bluish or opal-green rocks is as distinct as in a picture. To sit in a light skiff, and float down with the imperceptible current of these waters, is the most magical enjoyment that can be conceived. Only over the immediate spot, where, deep down among a cluster of rocks, the spring oozes forth, is the perfect transparency of the water disturbed. In every other part one seems to be floating in mid-air over dark ravines or smooth masses of white and coloured rocks. Sometimes their summits can almost be touched; then as we look over the boat's side, we seem to be hung in air over a chasm forty or fifty feet deep, and to the very depths the smallest objects can be distinguished, washed clear and clean and beautiful. Aquatic plants, and the “ long moss,” with its coral-like rootlets, and fine pine-like sprays stretching hither and thither, are expanded into graceful masses of dark green plumes, gently moved by the action of the boat, waving, yet almost motionless. There is motion enough in the current for pure and beautiful life; a silent though strong but imperceptible motion, typical of life itself—fresh, vigorous, young life. If there be Undines and Water Babies in this beautiful and unlearned world of ours, they must surely dwell in that “ spring of silvery brightness,” amidst “ those resounding crystal vaults, through which heaven, with its sun and stars, shines in,” and where below “ still glitter noble ruins high and stately, and gently washed by loving waters. That which dwells there is pure and lovely to look upon, fairer even than” — the world above.

Fortunately the banks of this beautiful spring are firm and rocky, or knotted with the giant roots of the wide-spreading water-oaks and other forest trees, up which the trumpet-flower and honeysuckle climb, and upon whose overhanging lower branches we can step from our skiff, and seat ourselves in a natural arbour, from which there is a view down into a sub-aqueous landscape of surpassing beauty.

I said that fortunately the banks are firm, because in Eastern Florida, near another lovely piece of water called the Silver Lake, a sink occurred where a party was bivouacking, and they returned from a ramble to discover that all their victuals and drink had suddenly gone down into the bowels of the earth!

Very odd-looking stones and fragments of rock are scattered over the surface of Western Florida. In some places they have collected in such numbers that they seem to have been brought there. These localities are pointed out as Indian battle-grounds, a vulgar belief prevailing that the Indians fought battles there, and used these stones as missiles of war; but I observed that they had always accumulated where there was a depression in the ground, and that they lay in great quantities in deep hollows. They were of all sizes, and generally full of cells and cavities more or less rounded, as if some softer substance had been washed out or worn away. Others had a jagged cinder-like appearance, and others again had only rounded or noduled surfaces. Whether these fragments have gone through fire or water to make them thus, I cannot pretend to assert, but it seems much more probable that they have been left there by the washing away of the looser soil, than that the proud Muskogees had accumulated them to hurl at the rebellious Seminoles, or that the latter would have stood passively in one spot without returning the compliment.

One might suppose that Secession must be indigenous to Florida, morally as well as geologically. The Seminoles, who seceded from the Creeks or Muskogees, and derived their name from the fact, are now reduced mainly to the small remnant who have retired to the extreme south of the peninsula, and it is a singular coincidence, that negroes, then as now, were the source of the family quarrels.

The sharp arrow-heads of chiselled quartz that may be picked up in the same localities, are more characteristic implements of Indian warfare, and have, no doubt, done more effective service. We have read of their being sent from the bow with such power as to pass through the body of a buffalo, and one was found pierced through a human bone, with which it had been buried.

CASH TERMS.

MONEY transactions were, as all the world knows, in the first instance matters of barter. The word for money, which survives with us in its adjective "pecuniary," was Latin for cattle, and we have it in our own tongue when the law talks of our goods and chattels. Sir John Mandeville described as "precious catelle" the divine ransom of humanity. When he meant animals, he called them bestes or bestaylle. If a man who used cattle for cash, wanted to buy anything with his cattle, he had to find somebody who wanted oxen and cows, and who possessed also, and was willing to part with, that which he himself happened to want. If a lady now went shopping in Regent-street with several droves of oxen behind her carriage, instead of gold in her purse, she would find some difficulty in getting a silk dress for a bullock. And if the good old system still prevailed, great would be

the confusion among cashiers in the shops. Fancy them giving change out of an ox, in sheep and pigs, while Lady Arabella, having nothing smaller than a fat pig, which she pays for a pair of gloves, looks with dismay at the five cocks and eleven tumbler pigeons offered her as change. What a Noah's ark of a cash-box it would be that contained a day's ready money in a house of business carried on under such difficulties! Money all alive must everywhere have soon gone out of fashion. There must be something that could really be put in a box and kept; for that, indeed, is what cash means. It is caisse, the money-chest, under which head French book-keepers enter the money actually paid in. In the islands of the Southern Ocean, they take red feathers as cash; in Africa, cowries, of which a sackful represents but little money; and elsewhere they take gold and silver valued by their weight, as commodities rare enough to have an intrinsic value. A small bit of gold would equal in worth as much corn or other bulky stuff needed by men, and gold would cast into lumps easily carried about and transferred, and therefore very readily received in barter. But then there was a difficulty. Gold and silver varied much in degrees of fineness. Before taking a mere lump of gold in exchange the receiver had to weigh it and to test it. And so in very remote days it was found that an official stamp set on each bit of metal by supreme authority was the best way of giving such immediate assurance of its weight and purity as would enable any one to receive it with confidence as of a determined value. The stamping is expressed in the word coin. Some tell us that Kauna means, in Arabic, to hammer, forge, or stamp, and that from the Arabs in Spain came the Spanish acunar, to stamp or coin money. But the source of the word is probably not more remote than the Latin cuneus, or wedge, with which the stamping was effected. Everywhere the right coinage has been vested in the sovereign, who claims also the right of determining the value at which each of his pieces shall be current. Now-a-days, in a great commercial country, gold and silver coinage must have an actual value answering to its professed value, or the hands of merchants will be tied. Formerly, kings who were short of cash made money by diluting the coinage, as a dishonest publican makes money by diluting and doctoring his beer and gin.

Blackstone held that the Sovereign of England has no lawful right to do that. The sovereign settles the weight, alloy, and value of coinage by indenture with the Master of the Mint, and may proclaim any foreign money to be current in the kingdom. But the royal power to assign nominal values, is at this day, with general consent, exercised in the case of our new bronze coinage, in which the pieces are not, like the old copper pennies and halfpennies, fair pennyworths and halfpennyworths of the metal used. In Sir Edward Coke's time, no copper money was known. That—except its use for a short time, as well as gold or silver, in the later

British period, the reign of Cunobeline—was first issued among us less than two centuries ago, in Charles the Second's time, to be current under certain limitations. British money of Caesar's time was coined on brass or iron. The Anglo-Saxons and the Anglo-Danes coined silver and brass, but the Anglo-Normans rejected the brass and coined only silver, till, in the reign of Henry the Third, gold was introduced into the Mint. For several centuries there were no coins but of gold and silver. For a long while the lowest silver coin was a penny, and that in times when the penny was equal to about a shilling in the money of the present day. The poorer English were not supplied with the halfpennies and farthings needed in their small daily traffic, till the reign of Edward the First. After this, silver rose in value, and the farthings dwindled in size until they went out altogether, in the reign of Edward the Sixth. James the First struck farthing tokens of copper and brass, but they were worth so much less than a farthing, that they were little used, and not long current. The first real copper money was coined by Charles the Second in sixteen 'sixty-five, but that was not made current; the true beginning of our copper currency, though made in the same reign, dates seven years later. The same king made also an experiment in coining tin, and the poverty of James the Second drove him into endeavours to coin money out of old gun-metal and pewter. That was not what we understand by sterling money, though what it is that we exactly do mean by sterling money antiquaries are not very sure. The word esterling, or sterling, is not found to have been applied to our coinage before the fourth year of the reign of Henry the Second. If it was then first used, it probably was not derived from the Saxon *steore*, as steering, guiding, or regulation money. A very old writer said, that as florins were called from the Florentines, our sterling money was named from certain easterling workmen from the north-east of Europe, who were employed upon the regulation of the coinage. At any rate, the word esterling, or sterling, was taken all over the Continent as a phrase for English money, and the fineness of our silver coinage expressed by it has been maintained now for six centuries.

The first gold coins were of pure gold, that is to say, twenty-four carats fine. A carat, according to one derivation, was the bean of an Abyssinian tree called *kuara*. This "carob bean" equals in weight four grains of wheat from the midst of the ear, another ancient standard. The ripe bean varied so little after gathering, that it was used as a weight in Africa for gold, and in India for diamonds. But in estimating gold, the word carat is used theoretically. Any piece of gold is said to consist of twenty-four parts or carats: which may be all gold, in which case it is gold of twenty-four carats: or which may contain one, two, three, four, or more twenty-fourth parts of alloy, in which cases it is said to be gold of twenty-three, twenty-two, twenty-one, twenty, or fewer carats

fineness. For example, six parts of alloy in the twenty-four, leaves eighteen parts of gold; that is expressed by saying that it is gold of eighteen carats. The twenty-four carat gold money established by Henry the Third was reduced a carat in fineness by Edward the Third. Henry the Eighth coined gold as low as twenty carats, and made also twenty-two carat crowns of gold, which established a standard of crown gold. That is the degree of fineness which has been adopted since the reign of Charles the Second as the sole standard of the gold money of England. On many Anglo-Saxon coins, the name of the coiner or moneyer answerable to the king and country for the produce of his Mint was stamped, in addition to that of the sovereign; and in the early Anglo-Norman times, when money was sometimes found to be debased, the moneymen were punished. But they had special privileges and exemptions from taxation, jury service, and distraint: with the one disability, that they were not free to leave the kingdom without special license.

When in those old times, besides the paramount Mint in the Tower there were lesser mints in different parts of the country, the maintenance of uniformity and the sole charge of the mystery of the dies was entrusted to an officer called the Cuneator. This office, like some offices connected with the Royal Forests, was hereditary, though it did not, like the hereditary rangerships, continue to our time. When the subordinate mints were abolished, the office passed out of use, and, probably dying out with some family, passed also out of existence.

Though Edward the Third was driven by want of money to dilute the coinage, he ought to have been ashamed of his want when he had such a mine as Ashmole says he had in Raymond Lully, who had been brought into England by Cremer, Abbot of Westminster, and agreed to make the king rich by his art, on condition of his making war against the Turks. Edward failing in his promise, Lully, tradition says, refused to go on with his work, and was put in the Tower. But what money he coined was "made by the magic of alchemy, and mystically inscribed on the reverse with a Latin text round a cross fleury, with lioneux, reminding those pharisees, the wise unbelievers in alchemic gold, when they had a piece of it in their hands, that Jesus passed out unseen through the midst of them." John le Rous and Master William de Dalby, reputed to be able to make silver by the art of alchemy, the same King Edward ordered his officers to find and bring to him, safely and honourably if possible, but forcibly if needful. And in the reign of Henry the Fourth it was by statute solemnly "ordained and established that none from henceforth shall use to multiply gold or silver, nor use the craft of multiplication; and if any the same do, that he incur the pain of felony in this case." It was too horrible to think that any one should use alchemical knowledge in base advantage over his neighbours, and while they toiled and moiled for earnings hardly won, had only to put a pound into the pot and

boil it till it thickened into ten pounds. It was especially horrible, because the art of that pot-boiling was unknown to needy majesty. Had it been known at court, the pot would never have been off the fire. Who, indeed, would not like to be taught by an alchemist how to make such Mint sauce.

And what of the Mint? Mynet was the form given by our forefathers, the Anglo-Saxons, to the Latin *moneta*, whence our money. A Mint they used to call a *mynet smithy*. And if money be *moneta*, what is *moneta*? *Moneta* is the goddess Juno. It was the name given her in consideration of the great number of admonitions or warnings with which she had favoured the Romans, and, according to Cicero, in particular consideration of one warning when, on occasion of an earthquake in the city, a voice was heard from her temple on the Capitoline, crying, "Sacrifice a sow that is in the family-way!" In the temple of that Juno *Moneta*, Roman coin was produced, and thence called also *moneta*. That origin of our words money and mint was signified by representations of the goddess Juno upon Roman medals, with the hammer, anvil, pincers, and die that were the implements of coining.

Our Mint is bound by law to transform into coin any gold bullion brought to it for that purpose if of standard fineness; but, practically, it is the Bank of England that does nearly all the business with the Mint in exchange of ingots of bullion for coin. The word *ingot*, now applied to the small bar of metal, was originally the name of the mould; thus Chaucer's alchemist

—put his ounce of copper in the crosslet,
And on the fire aswithe he hath it set—
And afterward in the ingot he it cast.

The German for it, is *einguss*, *in-gush*, from the German equivalent to the Dutch *ingieten*, to pour in.

Of our separate moneys the terms *sovereign* and *crown* speak for themselves. For the guineas, when they were first coined in sixteen 'sixty-two, the gold used was brought from Guinea. A shilling puzzles the philologists. The word, formerly *scill* and *scilling*, is said by some to be derived from a Hebrew verb meaning to weigh; by others from the Moesogothic *skula*, a debtor, because therewith fines were paid; others connect it with shield, as bearing the shield or arms of the prince who issues it; others derive it from the Latin *solidus*, a coin of the time of the Emperors; others derive it from the word in all Teutonic languages that expressed a large coin stamped with a deep cross so that it might be broken into smaller change; German *scheidemünze*, Swedish *skilje mynt*, Danish *skille mynt*. *Scylan* meant in our old language to divide. As for *penny*, it is our present form of an ancient word, not only Teutonic, but also Bohemian and Magyar, which signified money in general. Why it had that sense, nobody knows; but in Magyar, while *penz* means money, *pengui* means to ring. *Farthing*

is *fourthling*, originally the fourth part of any coin. Thus there is old mention of nobles, half nobles, and farthing nobles.

UP AND DOWN THE WORLD.

In travelling we see a hundred things, trifles often, which—far less from their intrinsic value or importance than from some circumstance associated with them, or from their addressing themselves, we hardly know why, to some peculiar perception in our mental organisation—fix themselves in our memories; and years afterwards, it may be, and without any recognised appropriateness to the time, place, or circumstances among which we find ourselves, shine out, as it were, like stars in a dim sky.

In the wakefulness induced by protracted illness, especially in that stage of it when suffering has ceased to be acute, and to it has succeeded the physical languor accompanied by the bright, though wandering and desultory mental activity that often marks the commencement of convalescence, these visions of bygone experiences start out with curious distinctness.

How many times, when sleep has held aloof from all wooing, when I have heard the slow hours strike in apparently endless succession, have watched the white moonlight creeping like a transparent stealthy ghost all along the wall of my chamber, have heard the crowing of the first awakened cock, have noted

The casement slowly grow a glimmering square
—how often, as if to take me away from the weary wistful time, has come some recollection of "days that are no more;" not sadly, nor "wild with all regret," but with a quiet brightness and reality singularly soothing!

Now, I go back to old childish days in Ireland, the first place from which my recollections date. I see the rambling old house, covering, with its dependencies, ground enough on which to build a hamlet; erected at different periods, in any and every style of architecture that suited the taste or convenience of each succeeding possessor; with great, seldom-used state rooms; with smaller rooms in dozens; with long, echoing passages, across which a rat would often dart in the twilight, scuttling away into cellars, vast as catacombs; with a kitchen that would take in many modern six-roomed houses; a fireplace where you might roast an ox; and walls decorated with the fronts and antlers of the largest deer shot on the estate for many generations, among which, at Christmas, were twisted holly, ivy, and laurel, and on whose tynes were wont to perch and sing familiar robins, seeking hospitality from the cold without.

In the sunshine lay around acres of neglected garden, wildernesses of roses, flowering shrubs in a thousand beautiful varieties, all blossoms that could live perennially with scant care and culture, and despite frequent visitations from the inhabitants of a rabbit warren, grown so over-populous that woods and fields swarmed

with the creatures, whose white scents might be seen flitting and disappearing by dozens in every glade and opening of the wide beautiful park, with its slow river, its forest-like woods, its silent grass-grown drives, now and then unexpectedly blocked up by a fallen tree, or obstructed by a fox earth or badger hole, of whose presence no one but the beasts of the wood, or a stray poacher, perhaps, became aware for months. A sad, lonely, lovely place, which so impressed my childhood, that even now when I think of it there returns a sense of the mysterious, half-terrified, fascination some of its most solitary spots had for me. I remember how, when quite a little child, I used to wander to them alone, timidly looking and listening, gaining courage by degrees to lie on the grass, and watch

The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops, through which a
dove
Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would fleet across the blue.

And so remain entranced till a sound—the sudden whirr of a bird's wings, startled to find the solitude of the place invaded, the rush of a rabbit through the dead leaves, the beat of deer's hoofs, the creaking of an infirm tree, would suddenly fill me with the unreasoning panic that often seizes a child's mind without any sufficient cause, where a moment before all was peace and security—would cause me to spring to my feet, and fly homeward at the top of my speed, panting, trembling, yet ashamed to own the cause of my emotion.

Later comes a vision of other woods, other fields, other streams, wilder far than those of my first memories; for between the two roll miles upon miles of Atlantic billows.

Far away, into regions hardly trodden by the foot of the European, stretch the woods; into the far wilderness roll the prairies; the fountain-heads of the rivers rise, who shall say where? *Here* is good cause for caution, if not alarm; often have I come on a tree, with bark newly scratched and torn by the claws of a bear, tufts of whose black hair would be found adhering to some jagged cleft; lynxes and loup-cerviers were not unfrequently seen at short distances from the homesteads; sometimes, even in the home-fields, the morning found one or two dead sheep, the bodies untouched, the throats only torn, and sucked dry of blood, by some unknown ravager, dainty in his horrible greed.

A great silence is in those woods; no bird sings among the branches, which, so dense is the forest, rarely wave with the breath of the wind. At times a woodpecker taps hard and strong on a decayed trunk; now and then a quick squirrel, with chirp and bound springs by; or, if water be near, a slow tortoise crawls through the rustling leaves; or a spruce partridge, a bird as large, and nearly as handsome as a pheasant, with a tuft of black feathers, burnished with metallic greens and blues at either side of its neck, depressed or elevated at pleasure, struts among the moss, hardly condescending to take wing,

till you are so close that a well-aimed stick or stone can knock him over. Sweetly on the ear, as you wander in the summer-tide, breaks a singing ripple, and following the sound you come on a clear little amber-brown brook, trickling over mossy stones, golden sands and smooth pebbles, warm to the touch where a sunbeam falls on them through arching boughs. Glittering trout flit to and fro, or hang in mid-current, poised on slowly-waving golden fins; minnows dash about the shallows, awkward cray-fish crawl among the stones, meteor-like dragon-flies flash across the gleam and gloom.

"The Falls"—they had no other name—were a favourite summer pilgrimage with me and mine. Although the actual distance was not great, the intricacies of the route, through dense trackless forest, thick with unyielding underbrush, and necessitating several fordings of the winding stream into which we plunged unhesitatingly, made the excursion a somewhat formidable undertaking. But how well worth the trouble! Suddenly the woods opened; before us, lay a deep basin, bordered with glistening sand; on either side, black rocks, softened with patches of vivid moss, bright lichens, trailing creepers, rose sheer from the water, crowned with straight pines, and in front,

Like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn did go,

as the cascade softly glided from its shelf of rock: no thunderous torrent, but a languid sheet of glistening gauzy silver, so little disturbing the basin below, that the ripples ceased to throb on the surface ere the water kissed the shore.

Full of trout—so unsophisticated that a line, a float, and a worm at the end of a hazel or alder rod, captured them by dozens—I have known them take a wild strawberry—was this basin; and as we never visited the Falls without such simple fishing-tackle, the rod being supplied on the spot, the chief ingredient of our sylvan feast was easily procured. The fire was quickly lighted, the baskets were opened, the potato-pot was hung over the blaze, the frying-pan was prepared, and the hapless trout transferred in a few minutes from the rippling pool to the hissing lard. To spare the feelings of sensitive readers, I should premise that as soon as the fish were taken from the water they were killed by putting a finger into the mouth and bending the head upward; this, breaking the vertebral column, causes instant death.

Bright were the prairies, intersected with singing rills, for that part of British North America is "a land of streams," dotted, as are also the woods, especially in spring, with lovely wild flowers—the pink exquisitely scented almond bell; violets, blue and white; twinberry, with polished leaf, blossoms like jasmine stars, always growing in pairs, and succeeded by the scarlet fruit, whose double growth gives it its name; dog-tooth violets; moccasin flowers; stately tiger-lilies; snowy crocus-like blood-root, whose bulb, when broken, emits thick crimson drops, said to be valuable in medicine;

luxuriant creepers; a hundred other sweet and lovely flowers of unknown name. Harmless little snakes rustled through the "lush grasses," bright green frogs chirped musically by the streams, cicadas sounded their "clip clip" like fairy seamstresses cutting out their summer garments; field-mice, large, and sleek, and beautifully marked, scuttled almost from beneath your foot; little brown birds made their nests in the tufts of grass; and clusters of scarlet strawberries stood up like bunches of rubies among their spreading leaves. And then, perhaps, when the summer has nigh spent itself, and the earth is dry, and the woods quiver in the hot air, and nature is silent in the heat, a spark from a homestead, or from the pipe of a labourer, or the ignition that may arise from the accidental friction of dry inflammable matter, sends forth the destroyer, and miles upon miles of forest and field become roaring masses of flame, then tracts of black desolation, without a leaf or blade of greenness. The prairie soon recovers its verdure—is, indeed, benefited and fertilised by the fiery baptism it has undergone—but the forest! long years fail to restore it, and not any scenery that I have ever witnessed—and I have travelled through an Irish turf-bog and desert sands—can in any way compete in dreariness with one of these devastated tracts. From the black cindery earth, stand up, as far as the eye can reach, endless columns of black cindery ghosts of trees; no bird can find shelter for its nest, no beast can find food or hiding, no flower can bloom, no leaf can flutter. The silence of death, the darkness of desolation, brood over all; the sun cannot cheer it, the summer rain cannot freshen it, till the healer, Time, shall

Reconcile the place with green.

And though he cannot bid the dead bones of the primeval forest, live, he calls up from the reviving earth grasses, little plants, mosses that need small nourishment, to prepare the way for tender saplings, destined to comfort the place once more with life and verdure.

Not far from our woodland home was a log-hut of the roughest build and materials, called Agnew's Camp. Its builder and sole inhabitant was a man whose mode of life and history formed a subject of mysterious comment and conjecture among all the scattered homesteads of the settlement. It was generally supposed, I know not on what grounds, that Agnew was the son of a gentleman, who, for some unknown misdemeanor, had fled, or been expelled from, home and friends. A good deal of romantic interest was excited about the silent solitary man, who lived utterly apart from all human companionship and sympathy. But, unfortunately for the romance, Agnew turned out to be only a vulgar thief. A gentleman farmer living some five or six miles from Agnew's Camp, one morning missed from the field, a horse and a sheep; ere long the horse returned alone. It was noticed that he had but three shoes, hence a clue as to the direction of his nocturnal expedition. The path

was tracked by means of the unshod hoof, to the log-hut, and there was discovered the carcass of the sheep, which Agnew had borrowed the horse to carry. He was arrested and imprisoned; whatever became of him on his release, he never returned to his camp, which soon fell to decay.

Often in the winter, came round parties of Indian hunters, with wild fowl, skins, and cariboo meat. They were in general a harmless race, very grateful to those who treated them kindly, but with "wild justice," implacable in having vengeance for injury. But already fire-water had commenced its destructive agency, and it was no uncommon sight to see in the streets of the town the once lithe grave dignified hunter, or the elderly squaw—I never saw a young Indian woman intoxicated—stupified and brutalised by the influence of the raw rank new rum sold at all the public-houses at a trifling cost.

To-night the wind howls, and there is a sound among the trees as of waves breaking on a far-off beach, and the sound carries me to a spot on the Norman coast, where, in a valley nestling amid the bare falaises, I have lain o' nights in a cottage room and heard the wind and the sea making moan together. Such an out of the world corner it was, with a little population of which all the men were fishermen, and all the women lace-makers, and where both men and women, not to say children, spoke a barely intelligible, often a wholly unintelligible, patois, in a loud high wailing tone, the voices of the first being generally small and thin, and those of the second hoarse and deep. At mid-day, or in the afternoon, came in the fishing-boats, and there was a crowding to the beach, while the fishermen in seven-league boots—which, if they fall into the water, fill and surely drown them—waded to and fro with creels of living, leaping, gasping fish; plies and *grosyeux*, and soles and lobsters, and ugly sea eels, and uglier skate, and queer pink and white soft-looking fish, and hopping shrimps, "sea fleas," as the Arabs aptly call them.

And then buyers and sellers would chaffer and chatter, and beat down and cry up, and gesticulate and wail and scream over the floundering ware, until the sale was completed and the cargo carried away in baskets, to be disposed of at Bayeux, Caen, and other neighbouring towns and villages.

A small adventure happened to me at this place. From the bedroom I occupied, a flight of stone stairs led down on the outside of the house into the little garden where, within the enclosure of a low dry stone wall, a few hardy vegetables and flowers braved the sea-breezes; quitting the garden, you came on the steep narrow pathway that led, through a breach in the cliffs, to the sea. One night, while dawdling to bed, as is my wont, my attention was called to a slight noise at the door which opened on this staircase: a sound as though something touched the lock. I paid little heed to it, until it was repeated; then I listened, but as I had turned the key, I felt little uneasiness, and as there was no repetition of the sound,

which had, indeed, been so slight as to be hardly worth notice, I—testing it by the consideration that had I heard it by day, I should have paid no attention to it—dismissed the subject from my mind, and went to bed and to undisturbed slumbers. Next morning, according to custom, I opened the door, which gave full upon the sea. My eye was caught by a darkish stain on the stone stair. I looked down the flight; another and another, all the way to the bottom; the unmistakable print of a bare wet foot. Whose, or why there, I never found out.

“Saint Nogat,” as its inhabitants call the Breton village of St. Enogat, is a place to be visited by those who want the bluest sea, the most silvery sands, the loveliest lonely bays, the simplest life, the most kindly people, and unlimited green figs at a nominal price: figs large and luscious and melting, peeling at a touch, plucked from vast trees, in whose spreading boughs you may climb and nestle and hide, with the ripe fruits clustering within reach all round, and the great leaves shutting out the noonday sun. Such breezy downs as the place has, and thatched cottages deep in vines and fig-trees and half-wild flowers! Such a beach, without a stone; such water, so clear that the sunny ripples are reflected on the sunny bottom, and the particles of sand you stir, glitter like atoms of silver through the wave they never stain. Such moonlights, and oh such sunrises! Coming in in glory of crimson and gold through your window, with mingled odours from the dimpled sea, and the thymey downs, and the dewy gardens!

And then the kindly good simple folk, with the native courtesy that springs from such kindness; their hospitality, their cheeriness, so different from the cold hard mistrustfulness of the Normandy peasant; their legends full of poetry. Arthur figures in them, and Guinevere, and Launcelot, Merlin, and Viviane; the forest of Broceliaunde, now called Bréscilien, where the “wily maid” found Merlin; and the Gré de Méen, where she imprisoned the simple sage; are not far from here. The Island of Avalon, where Arthur sleeps his long sleep, is off the coast.

I wonder why there comes across me now, the recollection of a room I spent a night in, at Lille. Hundreds must have occupied it, for it is a room in the railway hotel, close to the station. If I ever saw a room, or indeed a house, that told its own tale of fallen greatness, it was that room, and that house. The great salons on the rez de chaussée are tawdrily decorated as salles de restaurant, but their noble proportions remain; the wide stone staircase is dirty, and

along the corridors the doors are numbered, as hotel-room doors are wont to be, and some of the bedrooms have been vulgarised by flaring modern papers. But *my* room was hardly altered since the day when Madame la Marquise, reclining among lace and cambric on her alcoved bed, received her morning visitors, and sipped her chocolate from the *déjeuner* service of *rose du Barri*. Large it was, and lofty; the walls completely lined with wainscots carved in wreaths and medallions; the frame of the vast chimney-glass, and the tall mantelpiece, matching the rest, and forming parts of the fixed decorations of the room; and round the arched windows, with their deep recesses, and seats, and round the broader arch of the alcove again came the rich and graceful carvings. But perhaps the most curious thing in the room, and that most suggestive of the wealth and fancy of the former owners or occupants, was a pair of splendid Chinese doors, one at either end of the alcove; false doors probably, or enclosing closets. They were of black Japan, with human figures, birds, fruits, and flowers, in relief, and coloured like fine enamels, and with large gilt ornaments with rings, by way of handles, in the middle of each. Most French people, especially of the *ancien régime*, have a passion for “Chinoiseries,” and doubtless these specimens, purchased at a time when communication with the Flowery Land was on a very different footing, represented a sum of money startling in amount.

And now Madame la Marquise sleeps elsewhere, more sound than she did in the carved alcove; and her sacred chamber is an inn-room, where any one can lie that has a few francs to pay for his night’s lodging; and her salons are filled with little tables, on which hungry travellers eat hasty meals at so much per dish, and, if they think of it, say, so passes away the glory of the earth, and hasten to catch the train.

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